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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE IMPORTANCE OF
LITERARY ALLUSION IN
MRS. DALLOWAY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Importance of Literary Allusion in Mrs. Dalloway.

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date DECEMBER 14, 1979

Abstract

The highly allusive nature of Virginia Woolf's work constantly challenges the reader to discover how the multitudinous literary references enrich the novels' larger intentions. This thesis examines these connections in a single novel -- Mrs. Dalloway.

After a brief introduction, Chapter I chronicles Woolf's lifelong admiration for Shakespeare and delineates his importance in Mrs. Dalloway. Through her diaries and essays we see how Shakespeare became Woolf's standard for excellence in literature and a symbol of enduring culture. He makes an appearance in each of her novels, serving to unite certain characters and helping to reinforce major themes. In Mrs. Dalloway, allusions to the English Master characterize several of the personages, establish a spiritual bond between Clarissa and Septimus, help Clarissa to sort out her ambivalent feelings concerning death, and inform Septimus' roles as a vegetation deity and as a tragic hero.

Chapter II affirms that Woolf uses Cymbeline allusions in Mrs. Dalloway to draw certain parallels between the two works, but denies that the novel's ending embraces the upward movement of Shakespeare's play. By permeating the portrait of her dying god with irony,

Woolf indicates that the sterility of Mrs. Dalloway's civilization is too entrenched to be eliminated by the sort of facile denouement which allows for the return of fertility to Cymbeline's kingdom.

Chapter III explores to what degree certain characters in Mrs. Dalloway are influenced by what they read. Septimus constructs his tragic vision from the works of Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Dante and Darwin. Sally's and Peter's independence of thought is a product, at least in part, of their propensity for literature. And Clarissa's reading habits help to chart the diminution from her arcadian days at Bourton to her present existence as the wife of Richard Dalloway. Under the tutelage of Peter and Sally, Clarissa read Plato and Shelley; now that she belongs to a world in which the newspaper has replaced good literature as "the mirror of the soul," she reads an occasional memoir in bed.

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INTRODUCTION

In Virginia Woolf: A Biography, Quentin Bell explains why the highly allusive nature of Woolf's writing might present difficulties for the "modern" reader:

> Her indefatigable reading makes her appear to modern eyes, by no means an ignoramus but a quite affectedly literate person. We live in a society which has less time for books and which is less dependent on the written word; we no longer take it for granted that all educated people are perfectly at home in English and French literature and will at once recognize a quotation from Johnson or La Rochefoucauld; it was a natural enough assumption for the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen. . . .[1]

Though Bell is speaking of Woolf's days as a young reviewer for the Manchester Guardian, his point holds true for the entire body of her work. Woolf directed her fiction towards a small circle of friends, a group which had read and assimilated the greater portion of our literary heritage.[2] The allusions were not made to impress these people with Woolf's erudition, but to enrich and reinforce the larger intentions of her work. For the informed reader, each allusion is like a stone thrown into a pond: the initial entry barely disturbs the surface of his consciousness; but, once he understands the allusion, it immediately starts to send out waves of meaning in ever-increasing circles. It is my intention in this thesis to identify these literary stones and chart their reverberations in but a single novel--Mrs. Dalloway.

Growing up in a home frequented by some of the finest thinkers of the Victorian age, Virginia Woolf must have found that allusions to great authors seemed as natural as references to the ideas of family friends. In Night and Day, Woolf could have been thinking of her own childhood when she described the impact of "literature" on the mind of young Katherine Hilbery:

> From hearing constant talk of great men and their works, her conceptions of the world included an august circle of beings to whom she gave the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley. . . . They made a kind of boundary to her vision of life and played a considerable part in determining her scale of good and bad in her own small affairs.[3]

So too with Virginia Woolf, great authors became more than literary impressions; they were constant companions whose ideas and advice were just as fresh and meaningful for her as they were on the day of their conception. Of all these literary mentors, none exerted more influence than Shakespeare. At first, his overpowering presence turned the young Virginia away from the greatest of all English writers; but when she saw how strongly her brother Thoby was influenced by him, she too began to look to Shakespeare for guidance. Again and again, Shakespeare turns up in her writing as a symbol of artistic excellence and as a gauge for determining the "scale of good and bad" in her own life, as well as in the lives of her characters.

There are Shakespearean allusions in all of Virginia Woolf's novels, but nowhere is his presence felt more strongly than it is in Mrs. Dalloway. In a novel which is concerned with the enervation of modern civilization, Shakespeare becomes the ally of those who try to maintain a cultural continuity with the past, and the enemy of those who neglect the importance of such ties. Lines from his work link certain characters together, lend poetic power to their emotions, and point to parallels between his plays and Woolf's novel. Other references to Shakespeare's poetry help define Septimus Warren Smith, Mrs. Dalloway's shadowy protagonist. This young veteran, who is literally willing to die for Shakespeare, constructs his life from his voracious reading. The Romans, Aeschylus, Dante, Darwin, and others all influence Septimus' literary roles, but most often it is Shakespeare who provides the cues.

The theme of rebirth in Cymbeline informs Septimus' role as a dying god. But when we look at the allusions which connect him to the vegetation deities of mythology, we soon discover that he is no ordinary Adonis. Woolf, like so many of her contemporaries, recognizes the importance of maintaining contact with our mythical heritage in an age which is rapidly losing its mythical consciousness. Her portrait of Septimus is filled with the type of allusion which Sir James Frazer explores in _The Golden Bough_; but it is also drawn with the same irony that characterizes the dying gods in _The Waste Land_.

Septimus' part as a tragic hero is also influenced by Shakespeare, though Aeschylus, Dante, and Darwin provide direction as well. By enhancing her protagonist's war-induced tragedy with a five part structure, a chorus, and a Hamlet-like ghost, Woolf infuses this "common lunatic" with an uncommon dignity.

It is their extensive reading, rather than specific literary allusions, which help to characterize Peter Walsh and Sally Seton. In fact, throughout _Mrs. Dalloway_, Woolf provides us with insights into her characters' personalities by informing us of their reading habits. Peter and Sally, whose independence of thought contributes to their isolation from the prevailing society, read the best that literature has to offer. Those who support that infertile society, on the other hand, are more influenced by the newspaper than they are by Shakespeare. Clarissa's reading habits tell us something about both groups: when she was with Peter and

Sally at Bourton she read Plato and Shelley, but she hardly reads at all when she comes under the influence of Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread.

Neither the analysis of the characters' reading material, nor the discovery and understanding of the more conventional literary allusions is essential to a satisfactory exegesis of Mrs. Dalloway, of course. One knows reasonably well from their behaviour what to think of Hugh Whitbread and Peter Walsh without noting their literary preferences. Similarly, it is not necessary to glean that Septimus is playing out fragments from Shakespeare's work to realize that there is something "tragic" about his life. To neglect Virginia Woolf's allusive genius, however, is a failure to appreciate the intricate workings of a mind permeated with the history of literature. Every allusion, no matter how casual, has its function in the novel. When Miss Isabel Pole asks if Septimus is "not like Keats"(p.94), for example, the question not only foreshadows Septimus' early death, it also explains where the young veteran got the idea that "beauty. . . was the truth now"(p.79), and adds power to "the most exquisite moment of [Clarissa's] whole life"--kissing Sally on the lips while "passing a stone urn"(p.40). The "modern" reader may not be impressed by these threads of continuity, if he manages to see them at all, but the reader for whom the book is written knows both that they help tie *Mrs. Dalloway* together and that they attach it to two thousand years of literary tradition.

> O O O O that Shakespeherian rag....
> (*The Waste Land*)

Chapter I

THE IMPORTANCE OF SHAKESPEARE

Considering the nature of the lifelong, almost personal relationship between Virginia Woolf and Shakespeare, it is not surprising that allusions to his work take on such importance in Mrs. Dalloway. Woolf so reveres the English Master that it is almost as if he had been alive for her. He shows up with regularity throughout her fiction, and wins out over even the Greek dramatists to become the standard for literary excellence in her essays and journals.[1] A diary entry penned during the composition of The Waves is typical: Woolf starts by comparing her own work with that of the English Master:

> I read Shakespeare directly I have finished when my mind is agape and red-hot. Then it is astonishing. I never yet knew how amazing his stretch and speed and word coining power is, until I felt it utterly outspace and outrace my own, seeming to start equal and then I see him draw ahead and do things I could not in my wildest tumult and utmost press of mind imagine. . . .[2]

In an effort to mitigate this demoralizing rout, Woolf consoles herself with the thought that she shares her defeat with every other writer in the Western literary tradition:

> Even the less known plays are written at a speed that is quicker than anybody else's quickest; and the words drop so fast one can't pick them up. Look at this. "Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd." (That is a pure accident. I happen to light on it.) Evidently the pliancy of his mind was so complete that he could furbish out any train of thought; and, relaxing, let fall a shower of such unregarded flowers. Why should anyone else attempt to write? This is not "writing" at all. Indeed I could say that Shakespeare surpasses literature altogether, if I knew what I meant.[3]

It is interesting to note that this view of Shakespeare, held at the height of Virginia Woolf's creative powers, bears little resemblance to her earliest recorded opinions of the Elizabethan playwright. Victimized by the Victorian conventions concerning the "proper education" for a respectable young lady,[4] Virginia Stephen was forced to pursue her literary interests at home, while her brother, Thoby, was given the opportunity to study at Cambridge. Though she was an "eager recipient of his school stories, without any experience of her own with which to cap his,"[5] Virginia refused to accept passively all of her brother's literary opinions. Recording her memories of their sibling "confrontations" on October 12, 1940, Woolf writes with an objectivity nurtured by the passage of more than forty years. While her lack of enthusiasm for Shakespeare was genuine, she realized that her feelings may well have been colored by a certain jealousy of her brother's opportunity:

> Thoby had consumed Shakespeare. . . . He had possessed himself of it, in his large clumsy way, and our first arguments--about books, that is--were heated; because out he would come with his sweeping assertion that everything was in Shakespeare: somehow I felt he had it all in his grasp; at which I revolted. He swept down on me. How could I oppose that? Rather feebly I suppose; but still it was then my genuine feeling. A play was antipathetic. How did they begin? With some dull speech; about a hundred miles from anything that interested me. . . .[6]

In an attempt to prove her point, Virginia opened to Twelfth Night, only to go down to defeat. "That was," she admitted, "a good beginning." Thoby's reaction was extremely significant for Virginia, in that she saw, possibly for the first time, the rather awesome power a great writer can exercise over a sensitive mind; an insight she would put to use many times in her novels. It was not only that Thoby had consumed Shakespeare; Shakespeare had in turn consumed Thoby, setting himself up not only as the standard for excellence in literature, but also as the gauge with which the young man measured the value of all that surrounded him:

> And I remember his pride, for it seemed like a pride he took in a friend. . . . And so I felt that Shakes-

> peare was to him his other world; the place where he got the measure of his daily world: where he took his bearings; in which he took his way freely from Shakespeare, upon what happened. I wonder if I am right in thinking that (Shakespeare) had worked itself into his mind, so that he was half thinking of Falstaff and Hal and Cordelia and the rest--in the third-class smoker on the Underground when there was some squabble between drunken men: and Thoby with his pipe in his mouth sat in the corner, surveyed it over the edge of a paper, motionless, with a look that stuck in my memory; a look of one equipped, unperturbed, knowing his place, relishing his inheritance and his part in life, aware of his competence, scenting the battle; already in anticipation, a law maker; proud of being a man and playing his part among Shakespeare's men. . . .[7]

To what extent Virginia's reexamination of Shakespeare was prompted by her discussions with Thoby we have no way of knowing. We do know, however, that in a letter written in November, 1901[8] she was willing to admit to her brother that she had changed her mind about Shakespeare.

> My real object in writing is to make a confession--which is to take back a whole cartload of goatisms[9] which I used at Fritham & elsewhere in speaking of a certain great English writer--the greatest--I have been reading Marlow, & I was so much more impressed by him than I thought I should be, that I read Cymbeline just to see if there mightn't be more in the great William than I supposed. And I

> was quite upset! Really & truly I am now let in to the company of worshippers--though I still feel a little oppressed by his greatness I suppose . . . .[10]

It is easy to understand this feeling of "oppression" when we consider that all of Virginia's energies had been directed towards a literary career since her earliest years.[11] And though her accomplishments in 1901 consisted of little more than a rather sophisticated childhood newspaper adventure[12] and several surreptitiously written essays modelled upon the works of Hawthorne and the Elizabethans,[13] Virginia never doubted that one day she would assume a place of some importance in the English literary tradition. All those writers who had already secured their positions in that tradition, then, as well as all those who aspired to do so, were considered by Virginia to be her literary competitors. It must have been ego-shattering to compare herself with the one member whose accomplishments so greatly overshadowed those of all the others; and yet, as we have seen, Woolf never shrank from doing just that. A series of excerpts from her diary and various essays written during the zenith of her literary career[14] clearly demonstrates how Shakespeare had become for her, as he had been for Thoby, the most important criterion for literary greatness. In an essay for the first volume of The Common Reader, a work written concurrently with Mrs. Dalloway,[15] Woolf pays the necessary homage to Shakespeare before dealing with the plays of certain "lesser Elizabethans":[16]

> There are, it must be admitted, some highly formidable tracts in English literature, and chief among them that jungle, forest, and wilderness which is the Elizabethan drama. For many reasons, not here to be examined, Shakespeare stands out, Shakespeare who has had the light on him from his day to ours, Shakespeare who towers highest when looked at from the level of his own contemporaries . . . .[17]

Unfortunately, Woolf never found the time to "examine" these "many reasons" for Shakespeare's superiority at length; however, we do find glimpses of her ideas throughout her writings. In the summer of 1926, while recovering from a breakdown induced by the increased social pressures surrounding the success of Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf notes that her returning health is signalled "by the power to make images":

> The suggestive power of every sight and word is enormously increased. Shakespeare must have had this to an extent which makes my normal state the state of a person blind, deaf, dumb, stone-stockish and fish blooded. . . .[18]

In another diary entry some two years later, Woolf is; "as usual, impressed by Shakespeare." This time she is struck by the power of his language, finding that her own mind was "very bare to words. . . at the moment":

> I was reading Othello last night and was impressed by the volley and volume and tumble of his words; too many I should say, were I reviewing for The Times. He put them in when tension was slack. In the great scenes everything fits like a glove. The mind tumbles and splashes among words when it is not being urged on; I mean, the mind of a very great master of words who is writing with one hand. He abounds. The lesser writers stint. . . .[19]

And finally, shortly before deciding that Shakespeare "surpasses literature altogether," Woolf pays yet another tribute to the "Great William." In A Room of One's Own, where Shakespeare serves as the type of the "incandescent" adrogynous mind,[20] Woolf asks:

> . . . what is the state of mind that is most propitious to the act of creation? . . . Here I opened the volume containing the Tragedies of Shakespeare. What was Shakespeare's state of mind, for instance, when he wrote Lear and Antony and Cleopatra? It was certainly the state of mind most favourable to poetry that there has ever existed. . . .[21]
>
> . . . his poetry flows from him free and unimpeded. If ever a human being got his work expressed completely, it was Shakespeare. If ever a mind was incandescent, unimpeded, I thought, turning again to the bookcase, it was Shakespeare's mind.[22]

Having witnessed how important a figure Shakespeare is in Woolf's journals and essays, we should not be surprised to discover that he is equally prominent in her fiction. In fact, whether he is remembered as the quintessential poet who survives Orlando's entire trek through the history of English literature (not to mention the sex change),[23] as a symbol of enduring culture in _To The Lighthouse_,[24] or as a 'heap of broken images' by the enervated dilettantes in _Between the Acts_,[25] Shakespeare makes at least one appearance in each of the novels. In _The Voyage Out_, a line remembered from the _Tempest_ and a fondness for Shakespeare allow Clarissa to discover the poet in the otherwise recalcitrant steward, Mr. Grice. "They have swum about among bones,"[26] Clarissa sighs, when the seaman shows her "the treasures which the great ocean had bestowed upon him. . . ."

> "You're thinking of Shakespeare," said Mr. Grice, and taking down a copy from a shelf well lined with books, recited in an emphatic nasal voice:
>
> Full fathom five thy father lies,
>
> "A grand fellow, Shakespeare," he said, replacing the volume.
> Clarissa was so glad to hear him say so.[27]

In _The Waves_, it is the sensitive Neville who feels a strong spiritual affinity with the English Master. As a youth he prides himself on being able to imitate "even Shakespeare";[28] and Bernard knows that the best way to enter into his friend's world is through a discussion of *Hamlet*.[29] In fact, just as Shakespeare had taken hold of Thoby Stephen's imagination, he penetrates so deeply into Neville's mind that the people on Shaftesbury avenue become so many characters from his favorite plays. Looking up from his copy of Shakespeare, he muses: "Here's the fool, here's the villain, here in a car comes Cleopatra, burning on her barge."[30]

Shakespeare makes just one brief appearance in *The Years*, but his words reverberate with some of the novel's major themes--"death, ugliness and destruction."[31] Maggie, who believes that human beings are "nasty little creatures, driven by uncontrollable lusts,"[32] speculates on how future generations will view the world of 1910: "In time to come. . . people, looking into this room--this cave, this little antre scooped out of mud and dung, will hold their fingers to their noses. . . and say, 'Pah! They stink!'"[33] Josephine O'Brien Schaeffer, hearing "the echo of Hamlet's words to Horatio in the grave-digging scene," explains how the allusion is central not only to *The Years*, but also to Woolf's darkening vision of life in her final years:

> Surrounded by death, constantly thinking of dea[illegible] Hamlet describes the human condition: "And smelt so? Pah!" The view, however, is Hamlet's not Shakespeare's. Similarly encompassed by death [Schaeffer explains how several of Woolf's close friends died while she was working on the

> novel] , Virginia Woolf in The Years gives a picture of the futility, poverty, drabness of human life and ignores the possibility of heightened states of consciousness. . . .[34]

Turning to Night and Day and Jacob's Room, we find two novels in which Shakespeare's role is indeed significant. In the first it is almost as if Shakespeare were an actual personage rather than just a literary memory. Katherine Hilbery had grown up in an environment so permeated with the "talk of great men and their works [that], her earliest conceptions of the world included an august circle of beings to whom she gave the names of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, and so on. . . . They made a kind of boundary to her vision of life, and played a considerable part in determining her scale of good and bad in her own small affairs."[35] And, despite the fact that she has "never even read Shakespeare,"[36] she instinctively knows what is lacking in the poetry of William Rodney, her colorless suitor and a devout follower of Shakespeare (who would "spend three hours every day reading Shakespeare" if he had the time).[37] Rodney knows every line and character in Shakespeare with mathematical precision, but he lacks the emotional qualities necessary to write great poetry:

> His theory was that every mood has its metre. His mastery of metres was very great; and, if the

> beauty of drama depended upon the variety of measures in which the personages speak, Rodney's plays must have challenged the works of Shakespeare. Katherine's ignorance of Shakespeare did not prevent her from feeling fairly certain that plays should not produce a sense of chill stupor in the audience, such as overcame her as the lines flowed on, sometimes long and sometimes short, but always delivered with the same lilt of voice, which seemed to nail each line firmly on to the same spot in the hearer's brain. . . .[38]

Katherine does not doubt that William is a scholar like her father, but she realizes that his lack of feeling makes him a failure as a lover as well as a poet. Had she married him she might very well have ended up like her mother, searching for emotional satisfaction in imaginary love affairs with deceased poets. As Nancy Bazin points out, Mrs. Hilbery "is a lover of Shakespeare. He is . . . her image of the perfect male".[39] The narrator tells us that Mrs. Hilbery "had a plan. . . . for visiting Shakespeare's tomb. Any fact about the poet had become, for the moment, of far greater interest to her than the immediate present. . . ." She explains to Katherine:

> "I'm talking, I'm thinking, I'm dreaming of my William--William Shakespeare of course. Isn't it odd. . . that for all one can see, that dear old thing in the blue bonnet, crossing the road with the basket on her arm, has never heard that there

> was such a person? Yet it all goes on: lawyers hurrying to their work, cabmen squabbling for their fares. . . as if there weren't a Shakespeare in the world. I should like to stand at that crossing all day long and say: 'people read Shakespeare!'"[40]

Having dreamt of her William for six months, Mrs. Hilbery finally makes her excursion "to what she considered the heart of the civilized world."[41] She insists on making the trip by herself, and looks forward to the journey like a lover or a pilgrim who is about to see the object of her adoration:

> To stand six feet above Shakespeare's bones, to see the very stones worn by his feet, to reflect that the oldest man's oldest mother had very likely seen Shakespeare's daughter--such thoughts aroused an emotion in her, which she expressed at unsuitable moments, and with a passion that would not have been unseemly in a pilgrim to a shrine. . . .[42]

Upon her return from the shrine, Mrs. Hilbery is able to put Victorian convention aside, and she encourages Katherine's love for Ralph Denham. "Strewing the floor with flowers and leaves from Shakespeare's tomb," she advises her daughter as one who is happy in love and wishes that everyone else could share her happiness. "Nothing else matters in the world," she explains. "Names aren't everything; it's what we feel that's everything."[43]

While Shakespeare's influence is not quite so profound in _Jacob's Room_, it is his work that accompanies the shadowy protagonist throughout his life, and which in the end is deemed to be the best that literature has produced. As a student at Cambridge Jacob had surrounded himself with the classics, constructing a value system which reflected their truths. He is appalled to find that "the world of the elderly" looked elsewhere for guidance. Having lunched with the philistine Plumers and taken a look at their library, he sums up his disgust for their world by exclaiming, "Bloody beastly!" For Jacob, it was

> a world capable of existing--there was no doubt about that--but so unnecessary, such a thing to believe in--Shaw and Wells and the serious six penny week-lies! What were they after, scrubbing and demolishing these elderly people? Had they never read Homer, Shakespeare, the Elizabethans?[44]

Actually, Jacob's preference as a young man is for the Greeks rather than Shakespeare. On his trip with Timmy Durrant to the Scilly Isles he tries to read Shakespeare, since the plays "had frequently been praised, even quoted, and placed higher than the Greek."[45] Unfortunately, when the sail on their little boat flaps, "Shakespeare was knocked overboard. There you could see him floating merrily away, with all his pages ruffling innumerably; and then he went under."[46] It matters little, however, since Timmy and Jacob agree that, "when all's said and done, when one's rinsed one's mouth with every literature in the world, including Chinese and Russian. . . it's the flavour of Greek that remains."[47] The two boys imagine that they "are the only people in the world who know what the Greeks meant."[48] The narrator reminds us, however, that "Durrant never listened to Sophocles," and that Jacob, who knew no more Greek than served him to stumble through a play,"[49] never listened to Aeschylus.[50]

But these youthful dreams of the Acropolis, Athens, and Greek tragedy soon fade in the heat of experience when Jacob makes his 'grand tour.' In Paris he defends Shakespeare for having "more guts than all [the] damned frogs put together;"[51] and when he finally reaches the Grecian isles, he discovers that its "myths" cannot compete with the poetry of the English Master. Sitting in his hotel in Patras, Jacob "thought something in this fashion":

> . . . it is the governesses who start the Greek myth. Look at that for a head (they say)--nose, you see, straight as a dart, curls, eyebrows--everything appropriate to manly beauty; while his legs and arms have lines on them which indicate a perfect degree of development. . . . First you read Xenophon; then Euripides. One day--that was an occasion, by God--what people have said appears to have sense in it; "the Greek spirit"; the Greek this, that, and the other; though it is absurd, by the way, to say that any Greek comes near Shakespeare. . . .[52]

In noting the significance of Shakespeare in Virginia Woolf's writing, my aim has been twofold: I have tried to indicate how influential a figure Shakespeare was in Woolf's life and art; and I have pointed to certain patterns which are developed to a significant degree in Mrs. Dalloway. In a work which alludes to a sizeable body of literature, ranging from the classics to General Marbot's Memoirs, Shakespeare serves as the standard for excellence in literature as he does in Jacob's Room, Night and Day, The Waves, and in Woolf's diaries and essays. Allusions to his work help to connect certain personages, as they do in The Voyage Out, and they resound with Mrs. Dalloway's major themes as we have seen in The Years. A single line from Cymbeline reflects Clarissa's struggle with the ambiguous nature of death, serves as her link with Septimus, a stranger who helps her to resolve the problem, and informs this shell-shocked veteran's portrait as a dying god. Other references to Shakespeare help us measure the war's impact on Septimus; and still others show that Shakespeare so permeated Septimus' being that the young poet takes his bearings from the plays, as Thoby Stephen did, acting out his role as a tragic hero with deadly accuracy.

Indeed, throughout Mrs. Dalloway Shakespeare serves not only as a literary ideal, but also as a gauge with which to measure several of the personages. It is no accident that certain characters we are meant to sympathize with are strongly influenced by Shakespeare, while others whom we see in a less favorable light are abusive to him. Clarissa turns to Shakespeare on occasions when the power of his poetry is needed to complement an intensely felt emotion. Thus, when "going cold with excitement" at the thought of having Sally Seton beneath the same roof at Bourton, she shares both Othello's words and his feelings: "'if it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy'. That was her feeling --Othello's feeling, and she felt it , she was convinced, as strongly as Shakespeare meant Othello to feel it" (p. 39).

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun," a line from Cymbeline, serves as a consolatory message for both Clarissa and her spiritual counterpart, Septimus. This young poet was inspired so strongly by the great Master that he "he went to France to save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays and Miss Isabel Pole in a green dress walking in a square"(p.95) (Septimus had fallen in love with Miss Pole while she was "lecturing in the Waterloo Road upon Shakespeare").

Not everyone is as attentive to Shakespeare as is Septimus, however. Richard Dalloway--"a bit thick in the head," but a "thoroughly good sort"(p. 83)--actually "got on his hind legs and said that no decent man ought to read Shakespeare's sonnets because it was like listening at keyholes"(p.84). Lady Bruton, with "the thought of Empire always at hand," managed to have the dear isle of England "in her blood (without reading Shakespeare)"(p.199). But the worst of all is Dr. Holmes, who opened Septimus' copy of Antony and Cleopatra momentarily, and then actually "pushed Shakespeare aside!"(p.101). Septimus "would invent stories about Holmes; Holmes eating porridge; Holmes reading Shakespeare--making himself roar with laughter or rage, for Dr. Holmes seemed to stand for something horrible to him, 'human nature', he called him"(p.155).

As my thesis develops I will try to show why it is no coincidence that the characters who oppose Shakespeare are also those who in some way oppose Septimus; but first I want to return to the excerpt from Cymbeline mentioned above, and explain its considerable importance in relation to some of the novel's major themes. In the play, the lines open Imogen's funeral dirge, delivered alternately by Guiderius and Arviragus. The ostensible theme is the acceptance of death:

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
  Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
  Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

> Fear no more the frown o' the great,
>   Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:
> Care no more to clothe and eat;
>   To thee the reed is as the oak;
> The sceptre, learning, physic, must
> All follow this, and come to dust. . . .(IV.ii.258-69)[53]

In dying Imogen has escaped the extremities of the seasons, the tyranny of time, and the tyranny of her father's injustice.[54] But the poem is not as simple as that. While Imogen may be placed beyond all earthly pain and trouble, she is also beyond the pleasures of life suggested by the "golden lads and girls." In an excellent study of the play, R. C. Marsh analyzes the poem's ambivalent mood as follows:

> The tedious business of daily living falls away [after death] ; the strong and the weak, the oak and the reed, lose their distinctiveness, and are merged in nothing, the self no longer needs to be fed and protected. But the reed and the oak have each their own kind of beauty and value, and there is much pleasure as well as tedium in the business of living. All the variety of life is lost, together with majesty, power, learning, all the aspirations of the human mind.[55]

The dirge, then, tries to look at both sides of a life-death controversy with 'an equal eye.' And, as it is introduced at five key points throughout _Mrs_. _Dalloway_, it will help Clarissa to resolve a similar controversy;

a dilemma which is as central to Mrs. Woolf's story as it is to Shakespeare's.

The words come to Clarissa for the first time while she is walking along Bond Street, trying to sort out her ambivalent feelings concerning the relative value of the past and present and her attitude towards life and death. Her confusion is voiced in a series of contradictory musings: "she felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged";(p.10) "she always had the feeling that it was very dangerous to live even one day"(p.11), and yet, "to her it was absolutely absorbing; all this" (p.11); "what she loved was this, here now, in front of her";(p.11) but, a moment later we find her "trying to recover" "the image of [a] white dawn in the country," a dawn she experienced at Bourton as a young girl.[56] In the midst of this confusion Clarissa wonders if it matters "that she must cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? But that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived. . . being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best. . ." (pp.11-12). Guiderius' lines for Imogen suggest that death can, at times, be more comforting than terrifying. Looking into Hatchard's shop window, Clarissa reads in the book spread open:

> Fear no more the heat o' the sun
> Nor the furious winter's rages.(p.12)

The narrator's comment, which immediately follows the lines, alludes to another reason why Clarissa might consider death to be something of a refuge:

> This late age of the world's experience had bred in them all, all men and women, a well of tears. Tears and sorrow; courage and endurance; a perfectly upright and stoical bearing. Think, for example, of the woman she admired most, Lady Bexborough [with a telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed"(p.7)], opening the bazaar.(p.12)

For Clarissa, then, "who never lounged in any sense of the word"(p.85), it must have seemed burdensome at times to keep up appearances; to stand up under the "heat" of everyday existence in these difficult times. As Josephine Schaeffer explains: "Undeniably an upright bearing is a bit of a strain; the individual would like to slump, to recline. Life requires courage, endurance; death whispers 'Fear no more!'"[57]

Clarissa recalls the line a second time when she discovers that Lady Bruton has not invited her to a luncheon party.

> 'Fear no more,' said Clarissa. Fear no more the heat o' the sun; for the shock of Lady Bruton asking Richard to lunch without her made the moment in which she had stood shiver, as a plant on the riverbed feels the shock of a passing car

and shivers: so she rocked: so she shivered.(p.34) Immediately prior to receiving the news, Clarissa has, once again, been overcome with the beauty of her life--"how moments like this are buds on the tree of life" (p.33). And now she recalls Shakespeare's words in a conscious attempt to mitigate the disruption caused by Lady Bruton's thoughtlessness.

But it is much more than the social snub that makes Clarissa rock. Thinking of Millicent Bruton brings back the fear of death which has plagued her since the day she saw her "own sister killed by a falling tree"(p.87). Try as she might to assuage her terror by telling herself to 'Fear no more,' Clarissa is still overcome by the thought that Death's relentless accomplice, Time, was "shredding," "slicing," and eating away at her mortal existence just as the "clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day"(p.154):

> . . . she feared time itself, and read on Lady Bruton's face, as if it had been a dial cut in impassive stone, the dwindling of life; how year by year her share was sliced; how little the margin that remained was capable any longer of stretching, of absorbing, as in the youthful years, the colours, salts, tones of existence . . . .(p.34)

It seems as if Clarissa has forgotten about Death's more beneficent face altogether. Also forgotten is her theory on survival, and we begin to wonder if she ever really believed in it at all. Peter Walsh, who remembers the hypothesis from their days together back at Bourton, considers it to be a "transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe, or say that she believed (for all her scepticism), that . . . the unseen part of us. . . might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places, after death. Perhaps--perhaps"(p.169). In any case, Clarissa's thoughts on the matter are of little comfort to her now, as she feels "herself suddenly shrivelled, aged, breastless. . . since Lady Bruton, whose lunch parties were said to be extraordinarily amusing, had not asked her"(p.35).

In its third and fourth appearances, the passage from Cymbeline serves as one of the several links between Septimus and Clarissa. In her introduction to the 1929 Modern Library edition of Mrs. Dalloway, the author explains that Septimus is "intended to be [Clarissa's] double."[58] Several critics have dealt with this point at length, citing the numerous similarities in the protagonists' emotional makeups, and generally agreeing that "Septimus' character is in all essentials Clarissa's, but taken to a deadly extreme."[59] Though Shakespeare's words constitute just one of the numerous devices Woolf employs to dramatize this spiritual union, the fact that they appear independently in the two strangers' thoughts in scenes which are remarkably similar in content and tenor marks it as a particularly effective one. The words come to Clarissa as she mends the dress she is to wear at the party, her special offering to the life she enjoys so much:

> Quiet descended on her, calm content, as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause, collected the green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying 'that is all' more and more ponderously, until even the heart in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, that is all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the waves breaking; the dog barking, far away barking and barking.(pp.44-5)

The exhortation to 'Fear no more' is no longer associated with the voice of Death; rather it is Nature's assurance, transmitted through the heart, that all is right with the world. Septimus, who has always enjoyed the sun's warmth,[60] though he has been burnt by the heat of human contact, receives Nature's message in a moment of uncharacteristic calm:

> Going and coming, beckoning, signalling, so the

> light and shadow. . . seemed to Septimus Warren Smith lying on the sofa in the sitting-room; watching the watery gold glow and fade with the astonishing sensibility of some live creature on the roses, on the wall paper. Outside the trees dragged their leaves like nets through the depths of the air; the sound of water was in the room, and through the waves came the voices of birds singing. Every power poured its treasure on his head, and his hand lay there on the back of the sofa, as he had seen his hand lie when he was bathing, floating, on the top of the waves, while far away on shore he heard dogs barking and barking far away. Fear no more, says the heart in the body; fear no more.
>
> He was not afraid. At every moment Nature signified by some laughing like that gold spot which went around the wall. . . her determination to show, by brandishing her plumes, shaking her tresses, flinging her mantle this way and that, beautifully, always beautifully, and standing close up to breathe through her hollowed hands Shakespeare's words, her meaning.(pp.154-55)

The "going and coming" and the "glowing and fading" of the light on the wall, like the rhythmic up-and-down motion of Clarissa's sewing, conjures up visions of waves rising and falling. For Clarissa, who felt the "kiss of a wave" that morning at Bourton (p.5), the wave has always been a positive symbol of life's flow; but for Septimus, who identifies himself with "the drowned sailor,"[61] Nature's waves can drag him under just as easily as they can support him. Here, with Rezia "twisting a hat in her hands"(p.155) ("hats being made protected him"[p.97]), the waves lift him up and carry him away from the barking dogs of "human nature" which have pursued him for so long ("their packs scour the desert and vanish screaming into the wilderness" [p.99]).

For Clarissa, the dog which threatens her serenity seems far away, as well. Her moment of tranquillity proves to be short lived, however, as is that of Septimus. In The Field of Light, Reuben Arthur Brower proposes that 'fear no more' is a device which brings together the two parts of the novel's central metaphor--"the exhilarated sense of being a part of the forward moving process and recurrent fear of some break in this absorbing activity. . ." Thus, 'fear no more,' Brower explains, "suggests both freedom from fear and the fear of interruption."[62] In Clarissa's case the calm is broken by Peter's unexpected arrival:

> 'Heavens, the front-door bell!' exclaimed Clarissa, staying her needle. . . .
>
> 'Mrs Dalloway will see me,' said the elderly man in the hall. 'Oh yes, she will see ME,' he repeated putting Lucy aside very benevolently, and running upstairs ever so quickly. . . .(p.45)

Unaware that it is Peter downstairs, Clarissa thinks it is "outrageous to be interrupted at eleven o'clock on the morning of the day she was giving a party." As she hears a hand on her door she makes "to hide her dress, like a virgin protecting chastity, respecting privacy" (p.45).

Though Peter had threatened Clarissa's privacy when they were lovers at Bourton, she is "so glad" to see him after all these years. For Septimus the visitor will not be as welcome. With Rezia's help he has accepted the reality of life for the first time since the war. Having helped to design Mrs. Filmer's hat, he thinks that "never had he done anything which made him feel so proud. It was so real. . . ."(p.159) Rezia has just assured Septimus that nobody could separate them when Dr. Holmes appears at the door. The interruption is intentionally similar to the one which disturbs Clarissa, but "taken to a deadly extreme":

> Septimus could hear her talking to Holmes on the staircase.
>
> 'My dear lady, I have come as a friend,' Holmes was saying.
>
> 'No. I will not allow you to see my husband,' she said. . . .
>
> 'My dear lady, allow me. . .' Holmes said, putting her aside (Holmes was a powerfully built man).
>
> Holmes was coming upstairs. Holmes would burst open the door.
>
> Holmes would say, 'in a funk, eh?' Holmes would get him. But no; not Holmes; not Bradshaw. . . . (pp.164-65)

Having helped to create the spiritual bond uniting the two protagonists, the lines from Cymbeline are directly associated with death, once more. This time, however, Clarissa is able to learn from Septimus that death need not only be viewed as either a destroyer or as a release from the "heat" of life; that it can also be used as a weapon against compromise. When she first hears of Septimus' suicide her horror of death causes her to resent its intrusion at her party--"What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?"(p.203). But, as her own body begins to experience the young man's final agony--feeling the "rusty spikes" blundering through her body--, Clarissa perceives a certain beauty in Septimus' action. Again she has been thinking of those days of her youth back at Bourton: "A thing there was that mattered" then; and it had been continually defaced through the years, "let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter"(p.204). But Septimus had preserved it, flinging his life away, while she had only "thrown a shilling into the Serpentine (once), never anything more"(p.203). Clarissa understands that his death was a "defiance" and, somehow, an "embrace." She wonders if he had plunged "holding his treasure," as her thoughts are drawn back to a day when she was convinced, "if it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy"(p.204). It was her "punishment," somehow, to stand there in her gown, while the Septimus Warren Smiths of the world sink and disappear in this profound darkness." "She had schemed; she had pilfered. She was never wholly admirable. She had wanted success, Lady Bexborough and the rest of it. And once she had walked on the terrace at Bourton"(p.205).

Clarissa is "glad that [Septimus] had done it"; (p.206) glad that he had the courage to preserve that which had been "obscured" in her own life; to stem the diminution from past to present with which she has struggled so long. But this is not the entire story. Though she may never have been "wholly admirable," she has never relented in her fight to maintain the sanctity of the individual soul. And, if she feels "somehow very like. . . the young man who had killed himself"(p.206), it is because she senses that he is an ally. Clarissa had gone with a friend once to ask Dr. Bradshaw's advice, and she perceived that this "obscurely evil" man was "capable of some indescribable outrage-- of [forcing] your soul. . ."(p.204). She understands that a man like that could make life intolerable for a "poet" such as Septimus. She had to break with Peter or his domineering love would have destroyed them both (even Peter admits later that his "demands upon Clarissa. . . were absurd" [p.71]). And she detests Miss Kilman's attempts to "grasp" Elizabeth in the clutches of her sick variety of religion. Clarissa realizes that both "love" and "religion" can be soul forcers as well; that they are two faces of Conversion (p.140), Dr. Bradshaw's insidious "Goddess" who "feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace"(p.111). All such attempts to destroy another's autonomy "have tyranny at their core," a tyranny which Septimus refuses to submit to. He "did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot"(p.165). He throws it all away because, in doing so, he maintains the integrity of his soul, the one thing that matters more than life itself.[63] Having understood this, Clarissa realizes that she no longer needs to fear death, since it can be used to defend one's ideals.[64] As she prepares to return to her party to immerse herself in life, the words come to her one last time, "Fear no more the heat of the sun"(p.206). And, as we are left to consider the nobleness of Septimus' sacrifice, we remember the second verse of Imogen's funeral dirge:

> Fear no more the frown o' the great,
> Thou art past the Tyrant's stroke.
> (IV.ii.264-65)[65]

> . . . in a civilization reduced to "a heap of broken images" all that is requisite is sufficient curiosity; the man who asks what one or another of these fragments means--seeking, for instance, "a first-hand opinion about Shakespeare"--may be the agent of regeneration. The past exists in fragments precisely because nobody cares what it meant; it will unite itself and come alive in the mind of anyone who succeeds in caring, who is unwilling that Shakespeare shall remain the name attached only to a few tags everyone half-remembers, in a world where "we know too much, and are convinced of too little."
>
> (Hugh Kenner in The Invisible Poet)

> How Shakespeare loathed humanity--the putting on of clothes, the getting of children, the sordidity of the mouth and belly! This was now revealed to Septimus; the message hidden in the beauty of the words. . . . (Mrs. Dalloway)

Chapter II

SEPTIMUS AS A DYING GOD

As we have seen, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" is an integral thread which Virginia Woolf weaves throughout the fabric of Mrs. Dalloway: this does not mean, however, that we can assume it binds the novel's major themes to those in Cymbeline. Woolf makes the allusions so that we will explore certain parallels between the two works; but she also asks that we be attentive to the differences. Shakespeare directs Cymbeline's troubled kingdom towards tragedy for more than four acts only to save it in the end: Imogen, in a role mimetic of the dying gods and goddesses of tradition, revives in time to bring the promise of new life to her father's realm. Woolf, on the other hand, depicts a society whose infertility is so entrenched that it is questionable if even its war-torn dying god can bring it to new life.

In an attempt to support the thesis that the "allusion to Cymbeline. . . supplies the novel's central structure,"[1] Jean M. Wyatt draws a parallel between the theme of death and rebirth in Shakespeare's play and in Mrs. Dalloway:

In the play the dirge is sung over the body of Imogen. But her "show of death" is only a "locking-up the spirits for a time,/ To be more fresh, reviving"(I.v.40-42). Reverberations of this death and resurrection pattern echo in the words or deeds of nearly everyone in Cymbeline. The last scene is saturated with it. Imogen is about to be killed as a Roman prisoner when Cymbeline commands, "Live!"(V.v.97). Disguised as Fidele, she suffers at the hands of Posthumus a symbolic death marked by Pisanio: "You ne'er killed Imogen till now"(V.v.232). Imogen rises from the blow in her own character, reborn to Posthumus, who thought her dead. Posthumus is reborn to Imogen, who believes she has buried him, and Arviragus and Guiderius are reborn to the King after having been dead to him for twenty years. Cymbeline celebrates the rebirth of his entire family at the end of the play: "O! what, am I/ A mother to the birth of three?"(V.v.369-70)

So in Mrs. Dalloway the theme of death and rebirth radiates from the experiences of various characters to converge on a last scene of rebirth. . . .[2]

Clarissa's final repetition of "Fear no more" is both a farewell to Septimus and an affirmation of his continued existence. It is on one hand a funeral song in the spirit of the original dirge, telling Septimus that he need fear no more the ravages of life and human beings. On the other hand, it sounds the note of death followed by new life, the theme of Cymbeline. As Clarissa captures his thoughts and feelings, Septimus lives again in her, as he does in all things.[3]

While Wyatt's analysis of Cymbeline successfully captures the mythic pattern central to both the play and the literary genre to which it belongs, her attempt to assimilate Mrs. Dalloway into the archetype is misleading. Though the novel conforms to such a pattern at times, there are some important divergences and a considerable amount of irony which must be examined if we hope to interpret successfully Woolf's intentions. In order to illustrate my point, I would ask the reader to review with me certain elements of the archetypal pattern mentioned above, and then to compare it with Wyatt's thesis and the novel itself.

In Anatomy of Criticism and, again, in A Natural Perspective, Northrop Frye holds that "the mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth."[4] In tragedy and irony the first half of this cycle is examined, while romance and comedy are centered on the second. While it is not my intention to blur the distinction between Shakespearean romance and comedy,[5] they are alike in the two aspects which concern us here: first, their movement from death to rebirth is mimetic of the death and revival myths embodied in the vegetation gods and goddesses examined by Frazer in The Golden Bough[6]; and secondly, both genres respond to the social significance of the dying god myths by equating the god's revival with the rebirth of an entire society.[7] In a discussion of Shakespearean comedy which includes both Cymbeline and A Winter's Tale, Frye suggests that the structure "normally begins with an anticomic society, a social organization blocking and opposed to the comic drive, which the action of the comedy evades or overcomes."[8]

In Cymbeline it is not difficult to discern the two elements of the mythical pattern discussed above. The promise of fertility in the love between Imogen and Posthumus is blocked by numerous evils which, either directly or indirectly, lead to Imogen's "show of death." These include Cymbeline's imprisonment of his own daughter and the banishment of her lover, the Queen's attempts to place her son in power, Iachimo's chicanery, and Posthumus' unfounded jealousy. To see the social implications here we need only imagine how disastrous it would have been for Britain if the Queen's machinations had secured the throne for Cloten, or consider how Posthumus' exile served to divide the kingdom. Brought back to life, Imogen fulfills her mission as a dying goddess[9] in that her resurrection catalyzes the play's famous denouement described in Wyatt's article. I return to the scene only to emphasize how Imogen's personal success is tied to that of the entire kingdom. As one critic notes, "all the people she loves, admires and respects are safe and in friendship,"[10] while everyone who has obstructed her good fortune has either undergone a change of heart or been removed altogether: the Queen and her son are dead, Cymbeline atones for his actions and is happily reunited with his two long-lost sons, Posthumus repents for his lack of trust and is taken back by Imogen, and even Iachimo is pardoned for his deceit. Now the young lovers will be able to bring their own love to fruition, while Guiderius and Aviragus, who also conform to the archetypal pattern of the dying god, will be able to provide the leadership which promises a similar return of fertility to all of Britain. As the Soothsayer explains to his king:

> The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,
> Personates thee; and thy lopp'd branches point
> Thy two sons forth; who, by Belarius stol'n,
> For many years thought dead, are now reviv'd,
> To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue
> Promises Britain peace and plenty.(V.v.453-58)

In Mrs. Dalloway, as Wyatt points out, Septimus assumes the role of dying god:

> "The flesh was melted off the world. [Septimus'] body was macerated until only the nerve fibres were left. It was spread like a veil upon a rock . . . . The earth thrilled beneath him. Red flowers grew through his flesh; their stiff leaves rustled by his head;(p.76). Septimus' connection with the earth suggests a nature deity. He makes no distinction between himself and the world of

> nature: flowers growing through the ground grow through his body as well. Red flowers sprout from his flesh as from Adonis' blood. Adonis was once worshipped as a tree spirit.[3] Vestiges of his origin appear in the myth of his birth from a tree.[4] Septimus, too, feels a kinship with trees, "the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body"(p.26). And prominent among his "messages" to mankind are "trees are alive"(pp.26,75); "men must not cut down trees" (pp.28,163).[11]

Wyatt presents only a small portion of the evidence to support her claim that Septimus is something of an Adonis figure;[12] but, while I agree with her that Septimus is a dying god,[13] I feel that in her enthusiasm to make Mrs. Dalloway conform to the same archetypal pattern found in Cymbeline, she has overlooked both the complexity of Septimus' role and of the novel's design. Her efforts to establish proof of Septimus' revival, which will be discussed later, revolve around testimony by Clarissa and Rezia, and almost entirely ignore the necessary social implications. Even if Septimus does somehow "live again" in these two characters, his archetypal role as dying god is greatly diminished in that it has no effect whatsoever on the society he meant to save.

In looking for the social implications in Mrs. Dalloway we are not just concerned with Septimus' role as a dying god; we are reading the novel as Woolf wanted us to. In her diary entry for June 19, 1923, she recorded: "In this book Mrs. Dalloway I have almost too many ideas. I want to give life and death, sanity and insanity; I want to criticize the social system and to show it at work, at its most intense. . . . ."[14] While many critics have written at length upon the first themes mentioned here, only a few have investigated the last ones. Jeremy Hawthorn's fine book, A Study in Alienation, is probably the most thorough analysis of the subject. While Hawthorn makes it clear that he is not arguing for an interpretation of Mrs. Dalloway in terms of an "overt consistent political message," he believes that "Virginia Woolf saw important connections between social institutions and individual characteristics."[15] In an attempt to delineate Septimus' importance in this regard, Hawthorn suggests that, on one level,

> . . . as a result of the specifically social links which are drawn between Septimus (who lost the ability to feel through the war), and characters such as Sir William Bradshaw (who is a servant and eager supporter of that 'civilization' which is associated with the war), Septimus' madness is seen as the result of particular pressures engendered by an alienating society.[16]

Certainly, the "sexless," "lustless"(p.204) Sir William Bradshaw presents the greatest obstacle to spiritual fertility in the society Woolf presents for us in Mrs. Dalloway; however, he is not alone. His colleague, Dr. Holmes, is another judge who "saw nothing clear, yet ruled, yet inflicted"(p.164). Along with these high priests of science several members of the "ruling class"[17] must be added: Peter feels that the "admirable" Hugh Whitbread is somehow more harmful than "the rascals who get hanged for battering the brains of a girl out in a train"(p.30); the "domineering" Lady Bruton devotes all her energy to her own form of conversion--sending all the "respectable" young people off to Canada; and even the Dalloways must be seen as representatives of the "civilization" which sent Septimus off to war. As Bernard Blackstone proposes:

> Without the Dalloways there would be no Warren Smiths. Behind the Dalloways there rises the massive edifice of civilization: the Houses of Parliament, St. Paul's Cathedral, the War Office, the Law Courts, the professional classes, Harley Street.[18]

Septimus' tragic relationship to this "massive edifice of civilization" is drawn with an ironic hand throughout the novel. He is introduced in the midst of the confusion surrounding the appearance of the sinister grey car, whose backfire resonates like a "pistol shot" through the streets of London. When Edgar J. Watkiss humorously announces that it is "the Proime Minister's kyar," Septimus Warren Smith, a young man with an "apprehensive" look in his eyes, "heard him"(p.17). His instinctive reaction to this symbol of the state is telling: "The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?"(p.17). Looking at the motor car, Septimus is terrified by a feeling that "the world quivered and threatened to burst into flames"(p.18). Septimus' fears, though they are induced by an unbalanced mental condition, are not entirely unrelated to reality. The mindless reaction of the "well dressed men" standing in the bow window of White's is equally insane: They

> . . . perceived instinctively that greatness was passing, and the pale light of the immortal presence fell upon them as it had fallen upon Clarissa Dalloway. At once they stood even straighter, and removed their hands, and seemed ready to attend their sovereign, if need be, to the cannon's mouth, as their ancestors had done before them. The white busts and the little tables in the background covered with copies of the Tatler and bottles of soda water seemed to approve; seemed to indicate the flowing corn and the manor houses of England. . . .(pp.21-22)

Peter Walsh unwittingly elaborates further on the connection between Septimus and the civilization whose "flowing corn" only serves to mock its inner sterility. Clarissa's former lover, an Anglo-Indian who occupies a middle ground somewhere between Septimus and the society which destroys him, is torn by his own ambivalent feelings. While "disliking India, and empire, and army as he did," he is still overcome by "moments of pride in England," "when civilization. . . seemed dear to him as a personal possession"(p.62). It is no coincidence that two such "moments" are triggered by the appearance of Septimus. In the first instance, Peter sees Septimus and Rezia in the park and determines that they must be "having an awful scene"(p.79). He tells himself:

> The amusing thing about coming back to England, after five years, was the way it made. . . things stand out as if one had never seen them before; lovers squabbling under a tree; the domestic family life of parks. Never had he seen London look so enchanting--the softness of the distances; the richness; the greenness; the civilization (p.79).

On the second occasion, Peter's sentiments are used to fuel an even more sardonic attack on English society. As the ambulance carrying Septimus speeds by him, Peter muses:

> One of the triumphs of civilization. . . . It is one of the triumphs of civilization, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded. Swiftly, cleanly, the ambulance sped to the hospital, having picked up instantly, humanely, some poor devil; someone hit on the head, struck down by disease, knocked over perhaps a minute or so ago at one of those crossings, as might happen to oneself. That was civilization. . . .(p.167)

While Peter is unaware that his words serve as an ironic epilogue for Septimus' tragic story, the reader is not. Even in his death Septimus is surrounded by a symbol of the civilization he meant to save. He was "Septimus, lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society, . . . the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer"(p.29); he alone was "called forth in advance of the mass of men to hear the truth, to learn the meaning, which now after all the toils of civilization--Greeks, Romans, Shakespeare, Darwin, and now himself--was to be given whole to . . . the Prime Minister"(p.75) for the sake of society. Society, of course, refuses to be saved; refuses even to listen. With the exception of Clarissa's private epiphany, nothing at all has been learned from Septimus. Wyatt proposes that he has fulfilled the "dual function" of the "traditional" scapegoat--"to purify the community by taking its sins upon himself, dying to expiate them, and to embody the vegetation god who must be killed so that his fertilizing spirit may enter the new vegetation of spring"--[19]; and yet, nowhere do we find signs of either purification or rebirth. Septimus sinks quietly into oblivion while those who support this infertile society, whose values find their "culmination in the morality of war,"[20] carry on as before: Sir William Bradshaw, champion of "honour, courage, and a brilliant career"(p.113), continues to "rule" and "inflict"; Lady Bruton, a woman who "could have led troops to attack, ruled with indomitable justice barbarian hordes and lain under a shield noseless in a church"(p.199), advances one step further in her emigration scheme; and Hugh Whitbread holds on to his pernicious little job at court.

In order to support her claim, Wyatt looks to Septimus' words in the suicide scene. She quotes as follows:

> There remained only the . . . tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, not his . . . He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings--what did they want? . . . . "I'll give it to you!" he cried, and flung himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings. (p.165)[21]

Failing to detect any irony[22] in Septimus' final "imprecation," Wyatt interprets it as proof that "Septimus gives his life for human nature."[23] Nothing, in fact, could be farther from the truth. As I have suggested earlier, Septimus' sacrifice is no gift at all; rather it is a refusal to give Bradshaw, Holmes, and all other "human beings" what they want. Here, as he does throughout the entire novel, Septimus equates "human beings" and "human nature" with these high priests of science[24]: the last thing he notices before crying "I'll give it to you" is that "Holmes was at the door"(p.165) (a fact obscured by Wyatt's final ellipsis). "They" all want his inner-self,[25] the very thing that Septimus retains by throwing away his physical life. In death, then, Septimus does not fulfill the role of scapegoat--"Sacrificing himself for the community"--[26] as Wyatt argues; he rejects it. He has suffered through their war but he will not make the final act of submission demanded of him. They want the "thing there was that mattered"(p.204); but this, as Clarissa realizes, "he had preserved. [Septimus'] death was defiance"(p.206).

By suggesting that Septimus fails to initiate the social regeneration that is usually associated with his role as a dying god-scapegoat, it has not been my intention to deny the importance of these archetypal patterns in Mrs. Dalloway. It is unlikely that any English writer in the early twentieth-century was totally unaffected by Sir James Frazer's prodigious work, especially one as familiar with Western mythology as was Virginia Woolf.[27] I do feel, however, that we must be careful not to disregard the major thrust of a work in an attempt to make it conform to such patterns. By proposing that Septimus fulfills the dying god's "traditional" functions, and that Cymbeline's theme of "death followed by new life" is recreated in Mrs. Dalloway, Wyatt discovers an ending whose hopefulness, as I have tried to demonstrate, seems to be incompatible with the complexity of the novel's design. The problem, I believe, revolves around the word "traditional." In its time scheme, its character analysis, and in its narrative techniques Mrs. Dalloway makes a break with tradition, and I would propose that it is just as nontraditional in its use of mythological archetypes. In Septimus Woolf has not attempted to recreate the vegetation gods of tradition, rather she has altered our mythological heroes to make them more accurate representatives of her time.

Virginia Woolf, of course, was not the first writer to reinforce her insights into twentieth-century society by readjusting mythical patterns. T. S. Eliot had filled The Waste Land with "modern" dying gods, including an Osiris-like corpse whose rebirth is threatened by a "Dog," "sudden-frost," cruel Aprils, and an impotent fisher king who is still waiting at the end of the poem for the knight who will bring fertility to his kingdom. The poem does not negate the possibility of regeneration; however, its imagery of "dead land," "dried tubers," water that drowns, mechanical copulation, and abortion indicates how difficult the dying god's revival is in post World War-I civilization.

Though the ambience of Virginia Woolf's London is not as disquieting as that of Eliot's Unreal City,[28] it proves to be just as inimical to its vegetation gods. And I would suggest that by having Septimus identify himself with "the drowned sailor,"[29] a vegetation deity who appears as Phlebas the Phoenician in The Waste Land,[30] Woolf is acknowledging the common concern at the core of both works--the moral and cultural sterility of post-war Europe. It is highly unlikely that the allusion, one of several Waste Land echoes in Mrs. Dalloway,[31] was accidental, considering that the Hogarth Press had published the poem during the same period that Woolf was working on her novel.[32] She had been impressed by the poem when Eliot first read it for her in June 1922,[33] and it is possible that it inspired the inverted mythological allusions that appear in Mrs. Dalloway. In The Golden Bough Frazer said that "the hero-saviour of a culture is traditionally regarded as a representative of his people, and, is in some sense, a microcosm equivalent of the nation or tribe."[34] Testifying to the validity of these words, Eliot and Woolf saw that they could no longer call upon the conventional dying gods who revived every year with unfailing regularity; that in an age characterized by sterility even the potency of the vegetation gods would have to be in question.

Failing to recognize Septimus as a "modern" dying god, Wyatt looks for signs of his rebirth. Even her use of Clarissa and Rezia as witnesses is less than convincing. While it is true that Septimus' death is "life giving" for Clarissa ("he made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun"),[35] this is hardly sufficient evidence that he "complet[es] his archetypal role as dying god."[36] Far more important is Wyatt's recourse to Clarissa's theory on survival after death. In arguing that Clarissa "does not pity Septimus for the same reason that she does not fear her own death--because he survives as part of the flow of existence,"[37] Wyatt may be slighting the textual evidence somewhat. There is no allusion to this theory when Clarissa learns of Septimus' death, and with good reason. While Clarissa might well believe that we all survive in the flow of existence, she no longer fears death because, as we have seen, she now knows that it can be used to maintain one's personal integrity. Having learned this she does not need to console herself, at least for the moment, with a theory born out of her "horror of death."[38]

The argument involving Rezia's reaction to Septimus' death is initially persuasive; however, it does not hold up too well when scrutinized in the light of the entire text. Wyatt suggests:

> During his lifetime Septimus identified himself with "the drowned sailor," symbol . . . of the fertility god annually thrown into the sea to

> secure rain for the crops. After his death Rezia confirms the link between Septimus and the vegetation god: she sees him in the ocean and at the same time envisions "rain falling, . . . stirrings among dry corn"(p.166). Rezia's visions also supply a metaphorical equivalent of the fertility god's rebirth. They come not from her own experience, but from Septimus' thoughts. The visionary part of him lives on in her. She imagines the two of them on a "hill, somewhere near the sea, for there were ships, gulls, butterflies," and wonders where it could have been (p.166). The source: Septimus' vision of himself as the drowned sailor lying on a cliff overhanging the sea, surrounded by gulls . . . .(pp.155-56)[39]

The possible irony involving The Waste Land is only one of the problems which bother me here. A more important issue is Rezia's reliability as a witness. While her visions may seem to "confirm" Septimus' link to a vegetation deity, we must weigh them against her previous descriptions of her husband as a "malignant torturer" (p.73), and as "that hawk or crow which, being malicious and a great destroyer of crops, was exactly like him" (p.164). We should remember too that Rezia is described as being "gay" and "frivolous"(p.97). She has a "taste" for "ices, chocolates, sweet things"(p.97) which often obscures her vision of the truth. Right to the end she chooses to believe with Dr. Holmes ("Dr. Holmes was such a kind man" p.102) that "there was nothing whatever the matter" with Septimus (p.100). This insight into Rezia's taste adds an ironic note to the scene described above when we discover the circumstances which surround it. Prior to Rezia's experiencing these lovely visions of "rain falling, whisperings, stirrings among dry corn, the caress of the sea"(p.166), Dr. Holmes has given her a soporific to insulate her from the reality of her husband's death. The man who just triggered off Septimus' suicide

> came in . . . with a glass in his hand. She must be brave and drink something, he said (what was it? Something, sweet), for her husband was horribly mangled, would not recover consciousness, she must not see him, must be spared as much as possible. (p.165)

A final difficulty with Wyatt's interpretation of the scene concerns the "metaphorical equivalent of the fertility god's rebirth in Rezia's vision." While it is true that Septimus is the source of Rezia's dream, the suggestion that it does not derive from Rezia's experience could be somewhat misleading. There is no mysterious explanation as to how the maritime scene found its way into Rezia's imagination, if that is Wyatt's inference. It is merely one of many visions that Septimus described for his wife as she sat sewing in their parlour:

> He was drowned, he used to say, and lying on a cliff with the gulls screaming over him. He would

> look over the edge of the sofa down into the sea . . . .(p.156)

Neither Clarissa nor Rezia can really tell us what happened to Septimus' regenerative powers since they fail to understand the significance of the war in his cyclical movement from death to birth and back to death. A far better testimony is provided by Shakespeare, who accompanies his young protégé both before and after this turning point in his fortunes. As a boy, Septimus' creative powers are hindered by a mother whose values are epitomized by the cleanliness of one's hands at tea, and a village which offered "no future for a poet"(p.96). It is his experiences in London that allow Septimus to blossom. And, as the narrator indicates, this blossoming is tied directly to his immersion in Shakespeare and the rest of literature:

> . . . of all this what could the most observant of friends have said except what a gardener says when he opens the conservatory door in the morning and finds a new blossom on his plant: It has flowered; flowered from vanity, ambition, idealism, passion, loneliness, courage, laziness, the usual seeds, which all muddled up (in a room off the Euston Road), made him shy, and stammering, made him anxious to improve himself, made him fall in love with Miss Isabel Pole, lecturing in the Waterloo Road upon Shakespeare.(p.94)

Septimus' "flowering" is not only expressed in his love for Miss Pole, who gives him "a taste of Antony and Cleopatra and the rest"(p.94); it manifests itself in a flurry of artistic creativity, as well:

> 'It has flowered,' the gardener might have said, had he opened the door; had he come in, that is to say, any night about this time, and found him writing; found him tearing up his writing; found him finishing a masterpiece at three o'clock in the morning and running out to pace the streets, and visiting churches, and fasting one day, drinking another, devouring Shakespeare, Darwin, The History of Civilization, and Bernard Shaw.(p.95)

Unfortunately, Septimus' flowering is to be shortlived. The "prying and insidious fingers of the European War [which] smashed a plaster cast of Ceres" (p.95) also spell destruction for the poet's creative powers. The allusion to the Roman corn goddess is of critical importance for our discussion of Septimus as a vegetation god. As Frazer explains, the myth of Ceres and Proserpine (Demeter and Persephone) is substantially identical with those of Aphrodite and Adonis, Cybele and Attis, and Isis and Osiris.[40] Her metaphorical death at the hands of the war, then, signals a similar fate for Septimus and all other vegetation deities. His death, like that of Eliot's fisher king, is spiritual rather than physical. Septimus is still "bound to survive" (p.96), but there is no longer anything worth living for. The young poet had "developed manliness"(p.96) in accordance with the highest standards in English society, but in his own mind he knew that in the war "he had failed"(p.106).

> The War had taught him. It was sublime. He had gone through the whole show, friendship, European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive. He was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference. When peace came he was in Milan, billeted in the house of an innkeeper with a courtyard, flowers in tubs, little tables in the open, daughters making hats, and to Lucrezia, the younger daughter, he became engaged one evening when the panic was on him--that he could not feel.(p.96)

Having played an instrumental role in Septimus' creative birth, Shakespeare reappears to chronicle his spiritual death. The young man had gone to France to "save an England which consisted almost entirely of Shakespeare's plays"(p.95), and when he returns he is no longer able to appreciate them. Opening _Antony and Cleopatra_ once more, the "intoxication of language . . . had shrivelled utterly"(p.98). Septimus now believes that

> . . . Shakespeare loathed humanity--the putting on of clothes, the getting of children, the sordidity of mouth and the belly! This was now revealed to Septimus; the message hidden in the beauty of words . . . .(p.98)

The tragedy is that Septimus is unable to achieve a balanced perspective of Shakespeare either before or after the war. Woolf alludes specifically to Antony and Cleopatra because it is a play which explores the extremities of man's lower and higher natures. Critics as early as Thomas Rhymer noted that, it is a play which "can be read as the fall of a great general, betrayed in his dotage by a treacherous strumpet; or else it can be viewed as a celebration of transcendental love."[41] Antony is a man whose "taints and honours/ Wag'd equal with him"(V.i.30-31); and, as Hardin Craig points out, there are "two Cleopatras: the one licentious, self-willed, completely incorrigible; the other a perfect lover and a woman moved to heroic death by her love."[42] Having learned the lessons of war, Septimus sees only one side. The boy who had once fallen in love with his literature teacher now determines that "love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare"(p.99).

Josephine O'Brien Schaeffer cites two passages in her chapter on Between the Acts which may help to elucidate the relationship between war and mental fertility. The first excerpt is from Lytton Strachey's Literary Essays; and while I am not trying to suggest that Woolf was influenced by the essay, its sentiments are particularly apropos to our discussion here. Having gone to Cambridge in 1919 to see a production of Henry

IV, Strachey writes:

> Perhaps the best way of realising the implications involved in the fact that the war is over is to pay a visit to one of the Universities. In London the enormous human mechanism, in the country the inevitable processes of nature, serve to conceal the depth of the social change. Somehow or other, in war as in peace, London lives and works and amuses itself; and the woods grow green, and the rain and the sun bring in the harvest. But, to the Universities, the difference between war and peace was literally the difference between death and life; when the war ended, they went through a transformation as complete and sudden as that of a Russian spring; all at once, after the icy season of sterility, the sap has begun to flow again, and the exuberance of youth is made manifest.[43]

Shaeffer's diagnosis is directed at Woolf, but it seems equally well suited for Septimus: "The deeper part of the human consciousness, the part of man that responds to a production of Shakespeare, was damaged in the First World War."[44] For Septimus, however, there can be no Russian spring. His shell-shocked condition condemns him to relive the consciousness-deadening realities of war for the rest of his life.

The second passage was written during World War II, a war which gave the citizens of London an insight into the soldier's nightmare. In "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," Virginia Woolf is threatened by shells similar to those Septimus "watched explode":

> At any moment a bomb may fall on this very room. One, two, three, four, five, six . . . the seconds pass. The bomb did not fall. But during those seconds of suspense all thinking stopped. All feeling, save one dull dread, ceased. A nail fixed the whole being to one hard board. The emotion of fear and of hate is therefore sterile, unfertile. Directly that fear passes, the mind reaches out and instinctively revives itself by trying to create.[45]

In the trenches, however, where the threatening shells constitute an integral part of everyday existence and not just a frightening break from the routine of civilian life, the mind eventually loses the ability to revive itself. Septimus is no longer even subject to the emotions of hatred and fear; he is "indifferent." His sterility endures.

Returning to England after the war Septimus experiences a moment of existential recognition: "It might be possible that the world itself is without meaning"(p.98). He can, in fact, feel, but he is no longer able to connect those emotions to reality. Plagued by the same apprehension as The Waste Land's author--"that two thousand years of European continuity had for the first time run dry"[46]--the young veteran tries to provide the necessary link. He alone was called forth to learn the message wrought by the "toils of civilization," but he no longer remembers what the message was. Unable to reconcile what he learned before the war with his experiences in the trenches, he fluctuates between messages of love and hate. At times his words are those of a real dying god: "first, that trees are alive; next there is no crime; next love, universal love . . . ." (p.75); but all too often those sentiments are reversed:

> The secret signal which one generation passes, under disguise, to the next is loathing, hatred, despair . . . .(p.98)
>
> The truth is . . . that human beings have neither kindness, nor faith, nor charity beyond what serves to increase the pleasure of the moment. They hunt in packs. Their packs scour the desert and vanish screaming into the wilderness, they desert the fallen. They are plastered over with grimaces . . . . (p.99)

Unfortunately it is the message of despair which informs Septimus' portrait as a dying god. His loss of regenerative power is physical as well as mental. Sex disgusts him, the act of sexual communion being no more than the "breeding" of "lustful animals." Rezia wants a child, but Septimus even refuses to participate in the promise of human fertility. The dying god who should be concerned with restoring his lands argues:

> One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no

> lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that. (p.99)

To finish the portrait of her war-torn Adonis Woolf supplies him with his own Aphrodite. As Peter sits contemplating Clarissa's frigidness--"Clarissa was cold as an icicle"--(p.90) he is interrupted by a sound:

> . . . a frail quivering sound, a voice bubbling up without direction, vigour, beginning or end, running weakly and shrilly and with an absence of all human meaning into
>
> ee um fah um so
> foo swee too eem oo-
>
> the voice of no age or sex, the voice of an ancient spring spouting from the earth; which issued . . . from a tall quivering shape, like a funnel, like a rusty pump, like a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves which lets the wind run up and down its branches . . . .
>
> Through all ages . . . the battered woman--for she wore a skirt- with her right hand exposed, her left clutching at her side, stood singing of love--love which has lasted a million years, she sang, love which prevails, and millions of years ago her lover, who had been dead these centuries, had walked, she crooned, with her in May; but in the course of ages, long as summer days, and flaming, she remembered, with nothing but red asters, he had gone; death's enormous sickle had swept those trememdous hills, and when at last she laid her hoary and immensely aged head on the earth, now become a mere cinder of ice, she implored the Gods to lay by her side a bunch of purple heather . . . for

> then the pageant of the universe would be over.
>
> As the ancient song bubbled up opposite Regent's Park Tube Station, still the earth seemed green and flowery: still, though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth, muddy too, matted with root fibres and tangled grasses, still the old bubbling burbling song . . . streamed away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the Marylebone Road, and down towards Euston, fertilizing, leaving a damp stain.
>
> Still remembering how once in some primeval May she had walked with her lover, this rusty pump, this battered old woman with one hand exposed for coppers, the other clutching her side, would still be there in ten million years, remembering how once she had walked in May, where the sea flows now, with whom it did not matter--he was a man, oh yes, a man who had loved her. But the passage of ages had blurred the clarity of that ancient May day; the bright-petalled flowers were hoar and silver frosted; and she no longer saw, when she implored him (as she did now quite clearly) 'look in my eyes with thy sweet eyes intently', she no longer saw brown eyes, black whiskers or sunburnt face, but only a looming shape, a shadow shape . . . . . (pp.90-91)

As Wyatt notes, the beggar-woman, whose song is reminiscent of the Adonis lament, embodies "the earth-mother whose archetype underlies the myths of Ishtar and Aphrodite."[47] But again Wyatt seems to ignore the irony and satire which surround and permeate the passage in her determination to align it with traditional patterns.[48]

Certainly there is some evidence for an eternal promise of fertility, but it is a fertility which is more nightmarish than pastoral. The Aphrodite who once competed with Hera and Athena for the title of "The Fairest"[49] has been transformed into a "battered old woman"; her once beautiful song into a "frail quivering sound," absent of "all human meaning." The life-giving spring of Aphrodite's fecundity now issues from a "rude mouth," a "rusty pump"; and though her fertilizing stain may be left for the next ten million years, its powers have already diminished dangerously with the passage of time. The imagery of fertility which characterizes her is juxtaposed with signs of sterility: she is "like a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves"; the passing ages "have blurred the clarity of that ancient May day," leaving the "bright-petalled flowers," "hoary" and "silver-frosted"; and the image of her lover, "dead all these centuries," is nothing but a "looming" and "shadowy" shape. Now when she extends her hand for a token of his affection, she receives instead a symbol of the new society;

> 'Give me your hand and let me press it gently' (Peter Walsh couldn't help giving the poor creature a coin as he stepped into his taxi) . . . . (p.91)

Peter, of course, is not her lover. The lament for the youth cut off in his prime is meant for Septimus.

As soon as the last verse is finished Mr. and Mrs. Smith come on the scene. Rezia recognizes that this "poor old woman's message" is related to her husband's welfare, but once again she confuses its significance:

> . . . this old woman singing in the street . . . made her suddenly quite sure that everything was going to be right. They were going to Sir William Bradshaw; she thought his name sounded nice; he would cure Septimus at once . . . . (p.92)

The original lament contains a note of hope: no matter how painful the immediate loss, Aphrodite knows that her lover will be released from Hades the following Spring. In the chaotic jumble of sounds which she chants now, we have no way of knowing if that note still survives. Like the "ageless," "sexless" Tiresias, another expert on love whose consciousness encompasses the entire history of civilization, the old beggar woman comments on the full span of our mythical heritage. And like Tiresias too, the modern Aphrodite tells a story of diminution. She and Adonis, Isis and Osiris, and all the other vegetation gods alluded to in Mrs. Dalloway were once worshipped as important deities; now she is reduced to begging on the street, while her lover has been driven to schizophrenia. Can these enervated gods still promise the return of Spring? Will Septimus revive and bring fertility to his lands? Woolf never closes the door on these possibilities; but she never encourages us either. She puts the reader in a position which is something akin to that of the Fisher King--we can only try to put our lands in order and wait.

Mary walked to the nearest station and reached home in an incredibly short space of time; just so much, indeed, as was needed for the intelligent understanding of the news of the world as the Westminister Gazette reported it. . . .
(Night and Day)

Chapter III

WHERE PEOPLE GET THEIR IDEAS ON HOW TO LIVE

Having grown up in a world permeated with the discussion of literature, Virginia Woolf knew to what extent one's ideas, and even one's actions, can be influenced by the written word. Her brother Thoby got "the measure of his daily world" from Shakespeare;[1] Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Shelley play "a considerable part in determining Katherine Hilbery's scale of good and bad in her own small affairs";[2] and Bernard is so affected by his favorite authors that he assumes the personalities of some of literature's greatest protagonists.[3] In Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf explores this insight to a considerable degree. Septimus not only gets the measure of his daily world from authors such as Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Dante, and Darwin, he even plays out a tragic role which is compiled from their greatest works. It is literature, too, which helps to characterize Peter Walsh and Sally Seton, two more readers whose independence of thought sets them outside of Mrs. Dalloway's society. Clarissa realizes that the "something behind" Peter "might be that he was bookish" (p.174); while it is Sally who introduces her to Plato, Morris, and Shelley (p.38). These two are the friends whom Clarissa identifies most strongly with her days at Bourton, a time which she looks back to as a golden age. Opposed to them are the Hugh Whitbreads, the Richard Dalloways, and the Lady Brutons, people who pay more attention to the newspaper than to the Classics. It is appropriate that the same Clarissa who becomes excited over Plato at Bourton now only reads memoirs, a genre of literature which typifies her present milieu. In fact, Clarissa's literary regression comes to stand as a symbol for her personal dimunition on one level, and for the cultural enervation of her entire society on another.

Just before Septimus flings himself "down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings," he makes an insightful comment on the nature of tragedy. He is aware that the "melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out" is Holmes' and Bradshaw's "idea of tragedy," (p.165) not his own. Having read "Aeschylus (translated)" and devoured Shakespeare, Septimus knows that a reductive marketplace definition of tragedy has little to do with this complex literary genre. Unfortunately, because of a predisposition towards a darker view of human nature, Septimus' idea is flawed as well.

Though it is not my intention, nor is it within my capabilities, to delineate a comprehensive definition of tragedy, I think it is universally accepted that it admits and examines both sides of human nature, the lower along with the higher. In chapter XIII of his Poetics, Aristotle proposes that the ideal tragic plot should not deal with a totally virtuous man coming to a bad end, or with a totally corrupt man escaping victoriously; but that it should deal with a rather good man who comes to a bad end as a result of hamartia,[4] a term which S. H. Butcher translates as "error or frailty."[5] Frye's insights in Fools of Time, a study in Shakespearean tragedy, elucidate the point further. He finds that there are "two levels of nature" examined in Elizabethan tragedy:

> Man lives in a lower nature, the physical world or world of four elements which moves in cycles. . . . A state of aggressiveness, or what we call the law of the jungle, is "natural" to man, but natural only on this lower level of nature. Above this world is a specifically human nature, the world represented by the Christian paradise and the Classical Golden Age, and symbolized by starry spheres with their heavenly music. Man lost this world with the fall of Adam, but everything that is good for man, law, virtue, education, religion, helps to raise him towards it again. It is therefore also natural to man, on the higher level of nature, to be civilized and in a state of social discipline. . . .[6]

Septimus still hears the occasional song of a bird "from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk" (p.28), but his cast of mind too often fixates on the state of aggressiveness, "the law of the jungle." His tragic vision is too dark, "too dark altogether," to be accurate.

To fully appreciate the impact of literature on Septimus' vision, we should understand that he is not merely a passive reader. In The Waves, Bernard testifies to the influence of his favorite literary heroes on his own personality: he "changed and changed, was Hamlet, was Shelley, was the hero. . . of a novel by Dostoevsky."[7] Shakespeare, as we have seen, worked his way into Thoby Stephen's mind so that he "play[ed] his part among Shakespeare's men."[8] I propose that Septimus, too, consciously or not, incarnates his favorite fictional characters.[9] He reminds us alternately of Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Orestes, Dante and others, nearly always choosing to portray them in their moments of darkness.

Alex Page recognizes "the Lear-like cry Septimus emits every so often--'he would not go mad.'"[10] Hamlet's madness is feigned, but his view of mankind is remarkably close to Septimus'. The earth which he once loved, "appears no other thing to [him] than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours" (II.ii.314-16). The world " 'tis an unweeded garden/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/ Possess it merely" (I.ii.135-37). Othello's madness causes him to align his once sanguine views with those of Iago, one who thinks people are nothing more than mere animals. The noble Moor raves about whoring and breeding, "goats and monkeys"(IV.i. 164-ii.94), just as Septimus denounces this "breed of lustful animals"(p.99), when Rezia wants to have a son.

If we accept that Septimus' madness is reminiscent of the various forms of madness experienced by Shakespeare's tragic heroes, we cannot go along with Sir William Bradshaw who dismisses him as a "common lunatic." In the plays mentioned above, madness is the inevitable result when a figure of tragically heroic proportions abandons himself entirely to a single thought or force. "The fundamental tragic trait," as Bradley describes it, dictates such a concentration of the heroes' energies:

> It is a marked one-sidedness, a predisposition in some particular direction; a total incapacity, in certain circumstances, of resisting the force which draws in this direction; a fatal tendency to identify the whole being with one interest, object, passion, or habit of mind.[11]

For Hamlet that object is the need for revenge prompted by his excessive grief at his father's death; in Lear it is a similar need for revenge provoked by his daughters' ingratitude; while, with Othello, it is jealousy over Desdemona's alleged unfaithfulness. In Septimus the tragic trait is set off by the war and, more particularly, by Evans' death. His considerable sensitivity will not allow him to accept his combat experiences as a necessary part of becoming a man. Perceiving war as the horror that it is, Septimus feels that his participation in it is a dreadful sin against mankind. Rezia and Sir William insist that he has served "with great distinction in the war"(p.106), but Septimus knows that it is not so. "He had committed an appalling crime and been condemned to death by human nature"(p.106).

Septimus' madness would be scant evidence if it was the only clue that the tragic hero is one of his literary postures. But there is another important indication that the young veteran is more than a common lunatic, and once again Evans provides the key. Along with "abnormal conditions of the mind," Bradley includes the introduction of "the supernatural" as one of the three elements "occasionally or frequently" found in Shakespeare's tragedies. He notes:

> [Shakespeare] introduces ghosts, and witches who have supernatural knowledge. This supernatural element certainly cannot, in most cases, if in any be explained away as an illusion. . . . the supernatural is always placed in the closest relation with character. It gives confirmation and a distinct form to inward movements already present and exerting an influence; to the sense of failure in Brutus, to the stifled workings of conscience in Richard, to the half-formed thought of the horrified memory of guilt in Macbeth, to suspicion in Hamlet. . .[12]

Though Evans is not a senior Hamlet crying for revenge, I would argue that his role is not altogether unrelated to that of the murdered king. It is, after all, excessive grief over the loss of these two authority figures which leads to the destruction of both Hamlet and Septimus. "Excessive," of course, is a judgement made by characters who mouth only the platitudes of their societies. Claudius tells Hamlet that his persevering in "obstinate condolement. . . 'tis unmanly grief"(I.ii. 92-95). A similar questioning of Septimus' manliness is voiced by Rezia: she is unable to understand why her husband is troubled by the loss of Evans, since "such things happen to everyone. Everyone has friends who were killed in the war"(p.74). What Claudius and Rezia fail to recognize is that Hamlet and Septimus are not "everyone"; that the magnitude of their emotion is one of the things which marks them as tragic heroes.

Frye's explanation of Shakespeare's use of the supernatural[13] sheds additional light on Evan's symbolic importance in Mrs. Dalloway. Referring to Hamlet's father as an authority figure whose death serves to catalyze the tragic action, he explains:

> The important thing about the order figure, in short, is not that he gets murdered, but that he has been murdered. The essential tragic action starts just after his death. . . .
>
> The pushing back of the murder of the ruler

> into something pre-tragic is closely connected with a prominent figure in the histories: the tendency to idealize an earlier age.[14]

Granted, Evans is a prominent figure only for Septimus, but we can easily see that he does fulfill this symbolic function within the novel. Evans, an authority figure in that he is Septimus' officer, speaks to the protagonist from the home of the Olympians:

> Evans answered from behind the tree. The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang among the orchids. There they waited till the War was over. . . . (p.78)

This shade, then, who brings Septimus roses "picked by him in the fields of Greece"(p.103), reminds us that the present era is a diminished one; and, in a time when heroes no longer walk the earth, he connects Septimus with a golden age that is now lost forever.

A third important echo of Shakespearean tragedy is heard in Clarissa's musings on the triumphal nature of Septimus' death. She is glad that Septimus has killed himself because he has preserved "the thing there was that mattered"(p.204). As we saw in chapter one, she now understands that "there was an embrace in death," that "death was defiance"(p.204). Hardin Craig theorizes in An Interpretation of Shakespeare, "perhaps in true tragedy there is always a final note of triumph. . . ."[15] For Septimus, as for many tragic heroes, that triumph is his death. Again it is Frye who explains just how important death is to tragedy:

> In the tragic vision death is, not an incident in life, not even the inevitable end of life, but the essential event that gives shape and form to life.[16]

Ironically, it is the death of Cleopatra, the "tragic hero"[17] who probably makes the strongest contribution to Septimus' jaundiced view of Shakespeare's message, which most closely parallels his own. She chooses to die rather than to submit to Caesar's plan to parade her in the streets of Rome and to force her into conversion. Like Septimus, she chooses to preserve "the thing that matters," her inner self. Jan Kott makes the point in Shakespeare our Contemporary:

> Cleopatra, who will be a captive of Caesar's, who will be pointed at in the streets of Rome, is no more Cleopatra."[18]

In addition to these three important parallels, there are a number of other indications that Septimus is playing out his part among Shakespeare's men. Some, of course, may be purely coincidental; many, I am convinced, are not. The subplot dealing with the young veteran is presented in five sections.[19] Since Virginia Woolf's time schemes are anything but linear, we would not expect the divisions to conform rigidly to the five act tragic structure, as outlined by Bradley, for example. It is interesting to note, however, that the first mention of the War and Evans' death, the events which mark the turning point in Septimus' fortunes, are in the third section; while the climax and catastrophe are left, appropriately, to the final scene.[20]

Harvena Richter, who is fortunate enough to have access to the original manuscripts in the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library, finds that "Virginia Woolf specifically used the idea of the Greek chorus" in _Mrs_. _Dalloway_. Using quotes from the _Maroon_ _Leather_ _Dalloway_ _Notebook_, a journal which includes jottings on Woolf's impressions of Aeschylus' _Choephori_ and "a short running commentary on the writing of _Mrs_. _Dalloway_," Richter writes:

> In the first part of the novel there was to be "an observer in the street at each critical point who acts the part of the chorus--some nameless person." Later the idea of "chorus" became more subjective and was formulated, as in Greek tragedy, to convey the emotions of the character to the reader (audience). For the Regent's Park scene, while Peter Walsh sleeps, she planned "a chorus of calm and security. . . half of fear and apprehension," consisting of the nursemaid, sleeping baby, and a little girl.[21]

Richter goes on to remark that only the nurse and the child remain of the chorus in the final version of the novel, but I think there are signs that some of those nameless observers made it through the final draft. As

Frye reminds us, Shakespeare often substituted "buffoon types"[22] for the formal Greek chorus, which usually "represent the society from which the hero is gradually isolated."[23] And Virginia Woolf, too, in an essay written concurrently with Mrs. Dalloway, finds that "fools and madmen are the only characters in Shakespeare who could be considered as a chorus." Commenting upon Greek drama, she describes the chorus as the poet's means to introduce "general and poetic comment" without "interrupting the movement of the whole." It is comprised of "old men or women who take no active part in the drama, the undifferentiated voices who sing like birds in the pauses of the wind; who can comment, or sum up, or allow the poet to speak himself or supply, by contrast, another side to his conception. . . ."[24] The singing beggar-woman we examined in chapter two seems to qualify for both Frye's and Woolf's definitions of chorus members, as does Mrs. Dempster, though she does not retain the musical element of the chorus demanded by Aristotle in Poetics XVIII.[25] Her comments, like those of the beggar-woman, serve as an ironic reminder that post war London has little affinity with a lost golden age. She "could not help wishing to whisper a word to Maisie Johnson. . . ."(p.31)

> Roses, she thought sardonically. All trash, m'dear, for really, what with eating, drinking,

> and mating, the bad days and good, life had been no mere matter of roses, and what was more, let me tell you, Carrie Dempster had no wish to change her lot with any woman's in Kentish town! But, she implored, pity. Pity, for the loss of the roses. . . .(p.31)[26]

Apart from these structural trappings, there is a specific allusion concerning Septimus which, I feel, comes directly from Shakespeare. Early in the novel, Rezia notices that "her wedding ring slipped--she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered. . . ."(p.27) Later, in the third Septimus section, the ring is mentioned again. At first, Rezia cannot understand why Septimus continues to "point at her hand, look at it terrified." Then Rezia remembers what she has done, explaining that her "hand has grown so thin" that she put the ring in her purse for safekeeping. Septimus' reaction is that of a madman, but again it is a type of a madness familiar to Shakespeare.

> He dropped her hand. Their marriage was over, he thought with agony, with relief. The rope was cut; he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the Lord of men should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had left him). . . .(p.75)

The ring is all the "ocular proof" that Septimus needs to determine that Rezia has abandoned him. In Othello, it is a handkerchief that Desdemona lets "drop by negligence"(III.iii.311) which Iago uses to poison the Moor's mind against his wife. Posthumus, who does everything in his power to point Cymbeline towards tragedy, is convinced that Iachimo "hath enjoy'd"(II.iv) his wife merely because the villain has the bracelet which Imogen was to have worn as "a manacle of love" (I.i.122). Posthumus, like Othello, refers to his innocent wife as a whore and launches into a diatribe against all women (II.v.). Though Septimus is only mildly abusive to Rezia, he says later that "love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare"(p.99). The real significance of the ring incident is to show how Septimus' bent of mind, like Othello's and Posthumus', is predisposed to mistrust a wife who has never betrayed him, and to believe the world is indeed "a pestilent congregation of vapours."

Shakespeare is not the only tragedian to influence Septimus. He finds that "Aeschylus (translated)" contains the same secret message of "loathing, hatred, despair"(p.98). Septimus disregards the fact that Anthony's "taints and honours wag'd equal with him" (V.i.30-31), just as he fails to see how the beauty of Cleopatra's heroic death balances her dishonorable behaviour in the play's first four acts. In like manner, by concluding that Aeschylus' message was one of darkness, Septimus has to fixate on the savagery of Agamemnon and the Choephori, and neglect entirely the vision of new life contained in the Eumenides.

In determining that Virginia Woolf is alluding to The Oresteia trilogy in Mrs. Dalloway, I do not believe that I am taking unwarranted liberties. In the first place, the trilogy is practically synonymous with the name of the great Greek dramatist, not only because it is his greatest work, but also because it is one of the greatest testimonies to Athens at its zenith. Robert Fagles, the trilogy's most recent translator, places The Oresteia alongside the Parthenon as one of "the two noblest monuments to that age."[27] And secondly, we know that Virginia Woolf was reading The Oresteia for the first series of The Common Reader, a work undertaken concurrently with Mrs. Dalloway.[28] It is not surprising then that, while Woolf was contemplating Aeschylus for her essay "On Not Knowing Greek," something of the trilogy found its way into her novel. One need not read the essay to see the irony in the fact that Septimus had read Aeschylus "translated," but it is interesting to learn how strongly Mrs. Woolf feels about the matter. She believes that "it is useless. . . to read Greek in translations. Translations can but offer us a vague equivalent. . . ."[29]

I suspect Woolf saw that language is not the only difficulty Septimus encounters while trying to understand

Aeschylus. More important is the war-induced perversity of mind which impedes him from seeing Aeschylus' real message. Far from being a condemnation of Man and Society, the trilogy celebrates their strength and ability to survive. Fagles explains how a play which starts in the house of Atreus, "the embodiment of savagery," ends with a triumph for civilization:

> What Aeschylus builds upon the house of Atreus is a "grand parable of progress," as Richard Lattimore has described it, that celebrates our emergence from the darkness to the light, from the tribe to the aristocracy to the democratic state. At the same time Aeschylus celebrates man's capacity for suffering, his courage to endure hereditary guilt and ethical conflicts, his battle for freedom in the teeth of fate, and his strenuous collaboration with his gods to create a better world. . . . Aeschylus is optimistic, but he would agree with Hardy: "if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst". . . . Zeus, as the old men of Argos tell us, "lays it down as law/ that we must suffer, suffer into truth."[30]

The agent for this movement from light to darkness is Orestes, a figure who may well constitute yet another note in the disturbing literary chord that is Septimus. Two parallels are particularly remarkable: both are outcasts from the societies which they mean to save, and both are driven to madness by feelings of guilt for sins of violence. The major difference is that

Orestes is able to overcome both his alienation and his guilt, while Septimus cannot.

Like Septimus, "this last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast"(p.103), Orestes "is characterized as "a wanderer, a fugitive, driven off his native land."[31] While we never know if Septimus actually deserves to be tormented by guilt for his "sin against mankind," Orestes' sin of matricide is acted out with horrifying candor. Orestes' guilt takes the shape of the Furies, who say of their victims, "we track them down/ till they go beneath the earth. . . ."[32] In Mrs. Dalloway, it is human beings "hunt[ing] in packs" who "scour the desert and vanish screaming into the wilderness"(p.99) in pursuit of Septimus. The Furies, however, not only drive Orestes to madness, they also "galvanize his perceptions," as Fagles puts it, pushing him to Delphi and on to Athens, where he and his race are restored. In The Eumenides, Orestes is acquitted and admitted back into his society, and the Furies are persuaded by Athena to become "the kindly ones of Athens."[33] Human nature, on the other hand, is relentless in its pursuit of Septimus; and while it does force him "to suffer unto truth," it is a truth accompanied by death, not by reintegration into his society.

Dante Alighieri is the third author to deliver the message of "loathing, hatred and despair"(p.99) to

Septimus. And, though The Vision is a comedy not a tragedy, it is the tragic element which seem to exert the greatest influence on the young clerk: Septimus is continually "falling, down, down. . . into the flames" (pp.75,156,158), "descend[ing] another step into the pit"(p.100). Apart from an occasional glimpse of Paradise, Septimus concentrates on the tragic downward movement into the inferno, when the real thrust of the work is the "comic" upward movement to innocence.[34]

It is no accident that Dante and Aeschylus are mentioned together here. As C. J. Herrington points out, "in both tripartite works there is a similar movement, a gradual climb from torment, through testing, into the light."[35] Along with its spiritual quest, Dante's mission, like those of Orestes and Septimus, is civic in nature. As one critic puts it, Dante means "to reform the corruption of the Church, to give new life to the State, to heal the wounds of his country."[36] To do this, he too must undergo the same kind of initiation ritual; he must move from innocence to experience, must "suffer into truth." Dante examines the full horror of man's "loathing, hatred, and despair" in the Inferno, but he concludes his journey with the hopeful lesson of Paradise: that man's free will allows him to choose between good and evil and makes him liable to God's justice.[37] How similar this view is to Orestes', and how different it is from that of Septimus. Both Orestes and Dante learn that it is the creative tension between good and evil that gives man his potential for greatness. Septimus, conversely, goes to his death with the conviction that human beings have no potential for goodness, that they are the one thing which makes life unbearable --"He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings--what did they want?"[38]

By leaving vestiges of all these tragic elements in her depiction of Septimus, Woolf demonstrates her allegiance to the Western literary tradition. She still demands, however, the right to reshape it to the dictates of time. Her shell-shocked veteran is no more a "traditional" tragic hero than he is a "traditional" dying god. As both Bradley and Frye point out, traditional tragedy is always concerned with an "exceptional central figure,"[39] a person of "high degree" such as a king or a prince.[40] And, while Septimus fancies himself as "the greatest of mankind. . . the lord who came to renew society"(pp.29,107), the reader never forgets that, despite his "fantastic Christian name," he is still a clerk named Smith. By mingling these two images, Woolf manages to tie Septimus to the two greatest periods of tragedy, the fifth-century Athenians and the Elizabethans,[41] at one end, and to the twentieth-century ironic-tragedies of the "outsider" at the other. In doing so, she accurately perceives that the protagonist's isolation from his society is at the center of both.[42] "The dialectic of tragedy works through to a situation in which the heroic is normally dead and the less heroic is all that can remain alive," Frye tells us;[43] and it is a testimony to Virginia Woolf that this is the response which her schizophrenic veteran evokes in us.

Though Peter Walsh and the "young" Sally Seton are not affected by literature as strongly as is Septimus, there are certain characteristics which connect these three personages into something of a literary fraternity. Like Septimus, these voracious readers, whose combined reading list includes works from Shakespeare, Plato, Milton, Pope, Addison and Shelley, are considered to be outsiders. Peter, an Anglo-Indian who never feels quite at home in either culture, imagines himself as the "solitary traveller," and the uninhibited, cigar-smoking Sally is characterized by a "sort of abandonment," which Clarissa finds to be, "much commoner in foreigners than in Englishwomen"(p.38). Not satisfied to accept their society as they found it, they are sufficiently inspired by their literary mentors to try to save the world just as Septimus does. Sally, who is reading William Morris, author of the utopian News From Nowhere and a leading socialist of his day,[44] convinces

Clarissa that "they were to reform the world" by founding "a society to abolish private property"(p.38). While Peter, who "had been a socialist," still thinks

> the future of the world lies. . . in the hands of young men. . . such as he was, thirty years ago; with their love of abstract principles; getting books sent to them all the way from London to a peak in the Himalayas; reading science; reading philosophy. . . .(p.57)

There is yet another, more important, tie which binds these three readers together and opposes them to Sir William's world of "proportion" and Hugh Whitbread's decorative social sphere with its "smattering of culture": Peter, Sally and Septimus all maintain their ability to think independently in a society which demands conformity. Clarissa remembers that Peter "was a man. . . with ideas about everything."

> If you wanted to know about Pope, say, or Addison, or just talk nonsense, what people were like, what things meant, Peter knew better than anyone. It was Peter who had helped her; Peter who had lent her books. . . .(p.140)

And Clarissa knows now that when she had experienced her literary awakening at Bourton, "the ideas were Sally's of course"(p.38).

In contrast to these readers and thinkers we find the same group which neglected Shakespeare. Sally is sure that Hugh Whitbread has "read nothing, thought nothing, felt nothing"(p.82). Peter tells us that Richard Dalloway, though a "thoroughly good sort," takes up whatever he does "in the same matter-of-fact sensible way, without a touch of imagination, without a spark of brilliancy"(p.83). And Sir William Bradshaw, "who never had time for reading"(p.108), preaches a world of proportion, where the need for thinking is eliminated altogether by reducing the complexities of human existence to a set of mathematical formulas. His cure for the common lunatic with a world-saving message involves "six months' rest," "without friends, without books. . . until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve"(p.110).

Unfortunately, in an age in which the Sir Williams are "priests" and the Hugh Whitbreads are considered to be "admirable," the thinkers and poets must either submit or die. Sally is the first to go under, though we are never told why. Everyone predicted that "she would paint, she would write"(p.200). Clarissa had felt that Sally's life was bound "to end in some awful tragedy; her death; her martyrdom; instead of which she had married, quite unexpectedly, a bald man with a large button hole who owned, it was said, cotton mills at Manchester."(p.201). Peter Walsh, who escapes from the Dalloway's world for so many years, returns to English shores as a "battered, unsuccessful" prodigal and is forced to "cadge" for a job. Sally remembers that he, too, was to write; but, as of yet, there is "not a word!"(p.207) The only written legacy left behind, then, is that of Septimus. Just before his death, Rezia ties up and safely puts away the writing he had wanted her to burn: "how the dead sing behind rhododendron bushes; odes to Time; conversations with Shakespeare. . . ." (p.163)

Exactly where does Clarissa fit into this dichotomy between the thinkers and the non thinkers? We have linked her with all three members of the literary fraternity, but she also belongs to that other world characterized by Hugh Whitbread and Richard Dalloway. Under the salutary influence of Peter and Sally, Clarissa was reading Plato and writing poetry: thirty years later, she hardly reads at all. Perhaps if we examine this literary degeneration more thoroughly we might discover some more about both groups mentioned here, about Clarissa herself, and about the kind of education a "respectable" young lady was expected to receive in Victorian England.

Peter reminds us that in the Victorian age young ladies like Clarissa were not really encouraged to think, "since in those days a girl brought up as she was knew nothing"(p.66). Clarissa herself is amazed "how she got through life on the few twigs of knowledge Fraulein

Daniels gave them. . . . she [Clarissa] knew nothing"(p.11). She realizes for the first time how sheltered her life is the "extraordinary" summer when Sally comes to Bourton. It is this outsider who introduces her to the world of literature: there was Plato, Shelley, and William Morris ("wrapped in brown paper")(p.38). Sally's power is amazing, but it has to contend with a childhood of inculcation--"a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves"(p.13). "Women must put off their rich apparel. At midday they must disrobe"(p.35).

Still, there is a significant amount of progress made. William Morris' celebration of "the present pleasure of ordinary life"[45] finds a sympathetic ear in Clarissa: "what she loved was this, here now, in front of her"(p.11). But T. H. Huxley and John Tyndall also make their contribution to Clarissa's philosophy, nurturing the same sort of darker vision which Septimus takes to an extreme. Peter theorizes that she had developed her "atheist's religion of doing good for the sake of goodness," because she agreed with Huxley that, "since we are a doomed race, chained to a sinking ship. . . as the whole thing is a bad joke, let us, at any rate, do our part; mitigate the suffering of our fellow-prisoners . . . ."(p.86).

The fact that Huxley and Tyndall were Clarissa's "favourite reading as a girl"(p.86), and that Septimus "devours" Darwin as a young man (pp.75, 95), constitutes another literary tie between the two "doubles." Philip Appleman, in his Norton Critical Edition, Darwin, explains how Huxley, "Darwin's bulldog," and Tyndall extended Darwin's theories to the fields of biology and "cosmological thought in general."[46] The tie of course is not gratuitous, for these three scientists represent a body of thought which is central to Mrs. Dalloway. Septimus' tragic vision is, no doubt, as much a product of Darwin's influence as it is of Aeschylus', Shakespeare's, or Dante's. The publication of The Origin of Species effectively sounded the death knell for teleology leaving many people to conclude along with Septimus, "it might be possible that the world itself is without meaning"(p.98). By theorizing that the world was ruled by accident and chance rather than beneficent design, Darwin unwittingly removed the moral underpinnings from a civilization which believed in "progress" and the perfectability of man. The Origin's implications that man, in fact, was a cousin to the apes and a relative of all the other beasts, changed Nature's image from that of a loving mother to "Nature, red in tooth and claw." Septimus, who regards his fellows as "lustful animals" "hunting in packs"(p.99), and who sees dogs turning into men (p.76), takes Darwin's theories almost too literally.

Huxley, too, denies William Morris' view of man as a good and noble being who is corrupted by the perversity of society. In his "Prolegomena," Huxley's famous clarification of the erroneous notions surrounding Darwin's work, he writes:

> Men agree in one thing, and that is their innate desire to enjoy the pleasures and to escape the pains of life; and in short, to do nothing but that which it pleases them to do, without the least reference to the welfare of the society into which they are born. That is their inheritance. . . from the long series of ancestors, human and semi-human and brutal, in whom the strength of this innate tendency to self-assertion was the condition of victory in the struggle for existence.[47]

To see how such a view goes to the very core of Mrs. Dalloway, we need only to compare it with Septimus' description of mankind and another from Virginia Woolf's diary. Septimus feels that "one cannot. . . increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotions, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that"(p.99). While Virginia Woolf, in an explanation of the ideas she wanted to relate in Mrs. Dalloway, offers: "The truth is people scarcely care for each other. They have this insane instinct for life. But they never become attached to anything outside themselves."[48]

This "insane instinct for life" and what Huxley refers to as "the innate tendency for self-assertion" are the weapons necessary for survival. Septimus was "bound to survive" the war (p.96), but is eventually eliminated because he fails to adapt to his society. In The Origin of Species, Darwin asserts that "every organic being is constantly endeavouring to increase in numbers";[49] and yet, Septimus refuses to have children, thereby condemning his species to extinction.

In addition to the ideas fostered by Huxley, Tyndall and Morris, Peter recalls walks in the garden during which he and Clarissa "discussed poetry, discussed people, discussed politics (she was a radical then)"(p.40). Perhaps, if Peter had listened to Sally that day, Clarissa would have developed further:

> She implored him, half laughing of course, to carry off Clarissa, to save her from the Hughs and the Dalloways, and all the other "perfect gentlemen" who would "stifle her soul" (she wrote reams of poetry in those days), make a mere hostess of her, encourage her worldliness.(p.84)

But Clarissa does marry Richard, and all the interest in literature is left behind. It is not, however, that she simply turns her back on Sally and Peter; she merely returns to the world for which she had been educated, a world in which a woman is expected to relinquish her own ideas and take on those of her husband. Peter laments this intellectual submission as "one of the tragedies of married life. With a mind of her own she must always be quoting Richard"(p.84). When Richard proffers his incredible theories on Shakespeare, "Clarissa sucked it in. . . . Heaven knows if she didn't think him the most original mind she'd ever met!"(p.84). In the end, the same girl who was going to help Sally save the world accepts her role as the "perfect hostess"; the party has become her only gift. She admits:

> nothing else had she of the slightest importance; could not think, write, even play the piano. She muddled Armenians and Turks; loved success; hated discomfort; must be liked; talked oceans of nonsense: and to this day, ask her what the Equator was, and she did not know.(p.135)

Without Peter's literary counsel, Clarissa "scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed"(p.11). In that bed which was becoming "narrower and narrower," Clarissa reads "deep in Baron Marbot's Memoirs"(p.35). This is the kind of literature of which her class would approve. Like the tombs in St. Paul's which have become tokens of England's military victories, the Baron's presentation of the war as something noble and poetic stands in sharp contrast to Septimus' experience. Hopelessly surrounded by the enemy, with the temperature at thirty below, the wounded Marbot spares the life of an enemy who implores: "Au nom de votre mère grâce."

> Upon hearing a venerated name invoked, my spirit, exalted by all that which surrounded me, was struck with an hallucination; so that I believed I saw a white hand, so well known to me, alight on the chest of the young man I was about to run through, and I seemed to hear my mother's voice pronounce the words: "mercy, mercy!" My sabre came down![50]

It is Clarissa herself who makes the connection between the mental sterility of such literature and the "cold spirit" which has plagued her for so many years. As she reads of the retreat from Moscow, she is reminded of the "something central" which she lacked: "something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together"(p.36). She did, however, occasionally "feel what men felt":

> Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over--the moment.(p.37)

Clarissa concludes the passage, one in which the metaphors are uncommonly sensual for Virginia Woolf, by "contrasting" such moments of illumination with her narrow bed, "a candle half-burnt," and "Baron Marbot"(p.37).

The General's Memoirs, however, would certainly prove to be inspiring reading for Lady Bruton. She comes from a long line of Generals, and would have gladly "worn the helmet and shot the arrow and lain under a shield in a church"(p.199). Her name, too, is "beginning to be mentioned in memoirs" for the role she played in "some notorious intrigue of the eighties"(p.117). In fact, Richard Dalloway "meant, whenever he had a moment of leisure, to write a history of Lady Bruton's family" (pp.122-23). For, even though Richard might feel more at home with a good sporting novel, he can appreciate any part of that literature written by and for his own class. These are the books which reinforce the idea of history in which Richard, Hugh, and Lady Bruton believe; books which eschew real ideas, purporting to depict the truth with a compilation of romanticized facts. But which offers its reader a better insight into the human condition, General Marbot's poetic battles or the fictions of Shakespeare? Virginia Woolf poses the question by having Mrs. Asquith's Memoirs share the same display case with Cymbeline (p.12). And though I feel that the question is answered by the irony which surrounds memoirs in Mrs. Dalloway, it is interesting to see how Woolf handles it in this excerpt from her Collected Essays. Two young ladies are discussing the current state of English biography:

> Judith. . . the Classics--oh dear, what was I going to say?--Something very wise, I know, but I can't embroider a parrot and talk about Milton in the same breath. Ann: Whereas you could embroider a parrot and talk about Lady Georgiana Peel? Judith: precisely. Do tell me about Lady Georgiana Peel and the rest. These are the books I love. Ann: I do more than love them; I reverence them as the parents and begetters of our race.[51]

After plummeting from the heights of Shakespeare to the abyss of General Marbot's Memoirs, it would seem that there would be no place left to go. But if we are to do a thorough analysis of the importance of what the characters read in Mrs. Dalloway, there is still one more important area to consider. One of the novel's major themes is Conversion, Sir William's insidious goddess who loves "to impress. . . her own features stamped on the face of the populace"(p.111). Why should a deity bother with even the most ephemeral genres of literature when there is a much more efficient medium at her disposal? Woolf clearly sees the truth in John Stuart Mill's insight in his essay "Civilization":

> There are now in the country, we may say, but two modes left in which an individual mind can hope to produce much direct effect upon the minds and destinies of his countrymen generally; as a member of Parliament; or an editor of a London newspaper.[52]

Hugh Whitbread isn't the editor of the Times, but he certainly knows how to wield this powerful instrument. We are told that "his name at the end of letters to the Times, asking for funds, appealing to the public to protect, to preserve. . . and to stamp out immorality in parks, commanded respect"(p.114). Lady Bruton recognizes Hugh's talent and engages him to write her article on Emigration, a conversion scheme which consisted in sending the youth "born of respectable parents" off to Canada. After spending a frustrating morning trying to write the letter on her own, she gratefully turns to Hugh. For he "possessed--no one could doubt it--the art of writing letters to the Times"(p.121). He could "marvellously reduce Lady Bruton's tangles to sense, to grammar such as the editor of the Times. . . must respect"(p.122).

Hugh, of course, does not care at all about Emigration. He writes the letter as an act of "kindness" in order to ingratiate himself with the influential Lady Bruton. But who could doubt the sincerity or veracity of one of his masterpieces? He has made an art of manipulating public sentiment with phrases such as these:

> We are of the opinion that the times are ripe. . . the superfluous youth of our ever-increasing population. . . what we owe to the dead. . . .(p.122)

Richard knows that it is all "bunkum," though he thinks there is "no harm in it"(p.122). But, if we are to believe Peter, Richard is hardly an authority on the power of the press, since one could "know to a tittle what he thought by reading the Morning Post of a morning!"(p.86) Peter realizes just how dangerous a man like Hugh can be. He had read letters in Hugh's style "thousands of miles across the sea in the Times, and had thanked God he was out of that pernicious hubble-bubble . . . ."(p.191) As he watches Hugh "bowing and scraping" at Clarissa's party, Peter cannot help but think:

> Villains there must be, and, God knows, the rascals who get hanged for battering the brains of a girl out in a train do less harm on the whole than Hugh Whitbread and his kindness!(pp.191-92)

I don't propose that Woolf, who enjoyed a lifelong relation with the Times Literary Supplement,[53] sees anything that is intrinsically evil about the newspaper. She does seem to worry, however, when people take the medium for much more than it is. She identifies Hugh Whitbread with the newspaper because it is very much like him: "his affections were understood to be deep,"(p.114); but, in fact, "he did not go deeply, he brushed surfaces" (p.114). The narrator of Jacob's Room refers to the newspaper as "thin sheets of gelatine passed nightly over the brain and the heart of the world." "They take the whole," he continues, but they do not go deeply into the particulars. "How miserable it is that the Globe newspaper offers nothing better to Jacob Flanders."[54]

"Happily we are not governed by the evening papers,"[55] says Jacob, and yet Woolf sees that everyone might not enjoy this salutary detachment. In The Voyage Out, Clarissa is so glad to be "away from newspapers so that Richard will have a real holiday this time,"[56] but it is "the foreign correspondents of the Times [who] decided their route as much as anything else."[57] For Isa, in Between the Acts, the newspaper's authority is even more compelling. For her entire age, the Times has replaced books, "the mirror of the soul,"[58] as a reflection of the truth. In an attempt to get her mind off her toothache, she runs to the library

> The Faerie Queen and Kingslake's Crimea: Keats and the Kreutzer Sonata. . . . Yeats and Donne. . . .
>
> None of these stopped her toothache. For her generation the newspaper was a book; and as her father-in-law had dropped the Times, she took it and read: '. . . . The troopers told her the horse had a green tail; but she found it was just an

> ordinary horse. And they dragged her up to the barrack room where she was thrown upon a bed. Then one of the troopers removed part of her clothing, and she screamed and hit him about the face. . . .'
>
> That was real.[59]

No one denies that the search for what is "real" is treacherous, but it is unfortunate that an entire generation looks for it in the newspaper and not in "the mirror of the soul." Conrad defines art as "a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect."[60] One of his tasks as a writer was to provide "that glimpse of truth" for which the reader might have forgotten to ask.[61] Septimus, Peter, Sally, and, at times, Clarissa have not always forgotten to ask; and, by taking the time to work with great writers, they have had at least some success in glimpsing the truth. But what happens when a culturally enervated nation finds that the Classics are too difficult to bother with? What becomes of us when we all begin to agree with Isa? Perhaps this is the question Virginia Woolf means to pose during the "final scene" in the garden between Peter and Clarissa:

> 'Tell me the truth, tell me the truth,' he kept on saying. He felt as if his forehead would burst.

She seemed contracted, petrified. She did not move. 'Tell me the truth,' he repeated, when suddenly that old man Breitkopf popped his head in carrying the Times. . . .(p.72)

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1 Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: A Biography in 2 vols. Vol.I (London: Hogarth), 1972, pp.93-4. Hereafter cited as Bell.

2 Bell gives a good account of the impressive erudition attained by various members of Woolf's circle of friends.

3 Woolf, The Voyage Out, (London: Hogarth, 1929), p.33. Hereafter cited as The Voyage.

Chapter I

1 See her essay "On Not Knowing Greek," Collected Essays, Vol.I (London: Hogarth, 1966), pp.1-13. Collected Essays hereafter cited as Essays.

2 Woolf, A Writer's Diary, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth, 1969), p.157. Hereafter cited as Diary.

3 Diary, p.157.

4 Woolf comments on the subject in several of her novels, including Mrs. Dalloway (London: Penguin, 1975), p.11. All subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

5 Woolf, Moments of Being, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex: U.P., 1976), p.119. Hereafter cited as Moments.

6 Moments, p.119.

7 Ibid.

8 Though there is no date given for the discussion cited above, I am assuming that it took place in either the winter or summer of 1901.

9 Bell, in vol.I, p.24, explains how young Virginia came to be called "The Goat" by her close friends and family.

10 Cited by Bell, vol.I, p.68.

11 See Bell, vol.I, p.23.

12 The Hyde Park Gate News contained some of Woolf's first attempts at fiction. See Bell, vol.I, pp.28-30.

13 Bell, vol.I, p.51.

14 These are the years during which she wrote Mrs. Dalloway, To The Lighthouse, and The Waves.

15 See Bell, vol.I, pp.98-100.

16 A diary entry from the same period helps to explain that Shakespeare was an acquired taste for Woolf: "By the way, why is poetry wholly an elderly taste? When I was 20, in spite of Thoby who used to be so pressing and exacting, I could not for the life of me read Shakespeare for pleasure; now it lights me as I walk to think I have two acts of King John tonight, and shall next read Richard II." Diary, p.65.

17 Essays, vol.I, p.54.

18 Diary, p.97.

19 Ibid., p.127.

20 Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Hogarth, 1929), p.148. Hereafter cited as A Room.

21 A Room, p.77.

22 Ibid., p.86.

23 Woolf, Orlando: A Biography (London: Hogarth, 1928). See pp.22, 75 & 281.

24 Woolf, To The Lighthouse (England: Penguin, 1975), pp.123-24. When Mr. Ramsay begins to worry about how long his work will last, he admits that "Scott (or was it Shakespeare) would last him his lifetime".

25 Woolf, Between The Acts (London: Hogarth, 1941). See pp.66-67. Hereafter cited as Acts.

26 The Voyage, p.57.

27 The Voyage, p.57.

28 Woolf, The Waves (Middlesex: Penguin, 1964), p.40. Hereafter cited as The Waves.

29 The Waves, p.220.

30 Ibid., p.168. See also pp.180, 223, 235 & 243.

31 See Josephine O'Brien Schaeffer's fine chapter on Mrs. Dalloway, The Three-fold Nature of Reality in the Novels of Virginia Woolf (London: Mouton, 1965), p.183. Hereafter cited as Schaeffer.

32 Woolf, The Years (London: Hogarth, 1951), p.203. Hereafter cited as The Years.

33 The Years, p.203.

34 Schaeffer, p.184.

35 Woolf, Night and Day (London: Duckworth, 1919), p.33. Hereafter cited as Night and Day.

36 Night and Day, p.141.

37 Ibid., p.76.

38 Ibid., p.143.

39 Nancy Topping Bazin, Virginia Woolf and the Androgynous Vision (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1973), p.78. Hereafter cited as Bazin.

40 Night and Day, p.323.

41 Ibid., p.453.

42 Ibid., p.456.

43 Ibid., p.508.

44 Woolf, Jacob's Room (london: Hogarth, 1929), p.54. Hereafter cited as Jacob.

45 Jacob, p.74.

46 Ibid., p.76.

47 Ibid., p.122.

48 Ibid., p.122.

49 Ibid., p.123.

50 Ibid., p.122.

51 Ibid., p.205.

52 Ibid., pp.221-22.

53 Dr. Samuel Rees points out that "The sceptre, learning, physic"--royalty, scholarship and medicine--are all tied to Septimus' downfall: The Queen, whom people only think they see in the sinister grey car, has become a lifeless symbol of the traditions that send young men off to war; Shakespeare inspires Septimus to volunteer and intensifies his jaundiced view of mankind; while Drs. Holmes and Bradshaw mercilessly track him down in the name of science.

54 Arviragus, of course, is unaware that the word tyranny alludes to Cymbeline as well as time; Shakespeare, however, is not.

55 R.C. Marsh, The Recurring Miracle (Pietermaritzburg: Natal U.P., 1962), p.84. Hereafter cited as Marsh.

56 The "white dawn" is described on the opening page of the novel: "How fresh, how calm, stiller than this of course, the air was in the early morning. . . looking at the flowers, at the trees with the smoke winding off them. . . ."(p.5)

57 Schaeffer, p.105.

58 Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (New York: Modern Library, 1929), p.vi.

59 James Hafley, The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as a Novelist (Berkeley: U.P., 1954), p.65. Hereafter cited as Hafley.

60 See pp.77, 103, 165.

61 See pp.77, 102 & 107.

62 Reuben Authur Brower, The Fields of Light (New York: Oxford, 1951), pp.128-29. Hereafter cited as Brower.

63 Jean Love, in Worlds in Consciousness (Berkeley: Calif. U.P., 1970), p.159, also makes this point.

64 E.F. Shields, in "Death and Individual Values in Mrs. Dalloway," Queen's Quarterly, 80, No.1 (Spring 1973), pp.78-79, makes a similar point.

65 Septimus has escaped both the tyrants of "conversion" and the tyranny of time. See footnote no. 54.

Chapter II

1 Jean M. Wyatt, "Mrs. Dalloway: Literary Allusion as Structural Metaphor," PMLA, 88, No.3 (May 1973), p.440. Hereafter cited as Wyatt.

2 Wyatt, p.442.

3 Ibid., p.450.

4 Northrop Frye, A Natural Perspective (New York: Columbia U.P., 1965), p.119. Hereafter cited as A Natural Perspective.

-------------, Anatomy of Criticism (New Jersey: Princeton U.P., 1957), pp.158-62. Hereafter cited as Anatomy.

5 Frye normally circumvents the problem by including Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale in discussions of Romance, Comedy, and even Romantic Comedy. The plays are usually classified as "Romances" or "Tragic-Romances."

6 Sir James George Frazer, The Golden Bough, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1951). Hereafter cited as Golden Bough. I am thinking here mainly of part IV which deals with Adonis, Attis and Osiris; however, certain female goddesses such as Ceres and Proserpine (Demeter and Persephone) reenact the same cycle of death and rebirth.

7 This is true of all the dying gods discussed in The Golden Bough, especially Osiris. As king of the Egyptians he reclaimed them from savagery, gave them laws, and introduced the cultivation of cereals to his people. His death, then, is directly equated to the death of civilization, and his revival to its rebirth. See The Golden Bough, part IV, vol.2, ch.I.

8 A Natural Perspective, p.73.

9 Anatomy, p.138, refers to her as a Proserpine figure.

10 Marsh, pp.117-18.

11 Wyatt, p.443. Wyatt uses the original Harcourt edition, and so I have had to change the pagination of the textual references to make them conform to the Penguin edition.

Wyatt gives her footnotes as follows:

[3] The Golden Bough (New York: Macmillan, 1935). v.233.

[4] Ovid, Metamorphoses X. p.505-14. (The information is also contained in The Golden Bough, part IV.)

12 As Wyatt points out, Septimus "makes no distinction between himself and the world of nature." He is described as having "flowered"(p.94), and as being "rooted to the pavement"(p.18). When a nursemaid's voice "sends running up into his brain waves of sound"(p.25), he determines that "the human voice can quicken trees into life"(p.25). Trees "wave, brandish"(p.77), and "beckon"(p.26) to him. And "the excitement of elm trees rising and falling. . . with all their leaves alight" nearly drives him mad (p.26).

In addition to the similarities to the Adonis myth mentioned by Wyatt, Septimus' death seems to be a fairly obvious allusion to the myth of the Greek fertility god. Septimus is gored by the area railings just as Adonis is gored by the tusks of a wild boar. According to one of the legends reported by Frazer in the abridged Golden Bough (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p.327, it is Ares, the God of War, who "turned himself into a boar in order to compass the death" of Adonis. When we consider the war's contribution to Septimus' death, the Adonis allusions become all the more profitable.

13 I have equated the term "dying god" with "dying-reviving god" and "vegetation god" throughout the essay, as Sir James Frazer does the same. A "scapegoat," however, is a mortal human (or animal) who is substituted for a dying-god (see The Golden Bough, part VI). Septimus is indentified with both archetypes.

14 Diary, p.57.

15 Jeremy Hawthorn, Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway: A Study in Alienation (Sussex: U.P., 1975), p.31. Hereafter cited as Hawthorn.

16 Hawthorn, pp.31-2.

17 The real ruling class, the Queen and the Prime Minister, are virtually nonentities in Mrs. Dalloway. The Queen is only thought to be seen in her car; while the Prime Minister is described as someone "you might have stood. . . behind a counter and bought biscuits [from]"(p.190).

18 Cited in Hawthorn, p.30. Hawthorn gives his reference as: Bernard Blackstone, Virginia Woolf A Commentary, London, 1948.

19 Wyatt, p.443.

20 E.R. Shields, "Death and Individual Values in Mrs. Dalloway," Queen's Quarterly, 80, No.1 (Spring 1973), 84. Hereafter cited as Shields.

21 Wyatt, p.443. The line "What did they want?" is deleted from the Penguin edition.

22 Schaeffer, pp.89-92, explores this irony and the theme of "giving" in the novel.

23 Wyatt. p.443.

24 See pp.102-104, 108, 155, 163.

25 The "soul" is the term used by Shields, p.86, in a similar argument. Shaeffer, p.91, calls it Septimus' "wholeness."

26 Wyatt, p.443.

27 Bell, vol.1, p.70, explains how Virginia was introduced to the Greek classics. In 1901 she writes Thoby that she is reading the Trachiniae and has gone through Antigone and Oedipus Coloneus. Her continued interest in the classics is articulated in her essay "On Not Knowing Greek" (Collected Essays, vol.I), which was written concurrently with Mrs. Dalloway.

28 Hawthorn, p.73, feels "that the London of Mrs. Dalloway is in many respects very close to Mr. Eliot's Unreal City." He is answering Dorothy Brewster's assertion (Virginia Woolf's London, 1959) that "the crowds streaming incessantly back and forth over Waterloo and Westminister and London

Bridge are not those of Mr. Eliot's Unreal City--death has not undone them in six hundred years".

29 He does so four times: pp. 77, 103, 107, 154.

30 T.S. Eliot, Selected Poems (London: Faber, 1975), pp.51-74. Madam Sosostris tells her client that his card is "the drowned Phoenician Sailor"(1.47). Phlebas reappears in part IV, "Death by Water."

31 Perhaps the most important of these is brought out in Hawthorn: "Septimus' lack of feeling indicates a general deadness in society in a machine age, the same deadness that Eliot is concerned to explore in 'The Waste Land'"(p.75). Hawthorn points to the description of "motor engines whose throb, 'sounded like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body,' which recalls the human engine in the third section of 'The Waste Land', which waits like a taxi, throbbing. . . ." I think that Septimus' reaction to Rezia's tears is an even better illustration of Hawthorn's point: "Far away he heard her sobbing; he heard it accurately, he noticed it distinctly; he compared it to a piston thumping. But he felt nothing"(p.100). Mrs. Woolf makes it clear that a society whose values are concerned with war and "proportion" is to blame for Septimus' condition. The young soldiers who march past Peter are trained to react like machines--"they marched. . . as if one will worked legs and arms uniformly. . . ." (p.57). Septimus falls prey to this conditioning, but he escapes Dr. Bradshaw's mathematical formula for curing the "common lunatic": "six months' rest (subtract "books" and "friends"); until a man who went in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve"(p.110).

Hawthorn also points to the final stroke of St. Margaret's bell which Peter fears has "tolled for death that surprised in the midst of life, Clarissa falling where she stood, in her drawing room"(p.56). It is not Clarissa who will die, of course; it is Septimus, her double. In "The Burial of The Dead," St. Mary Woolnoth keeps the hours "With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine"(I.68). Her bell rings for the crowd flowing over London Bridge, but it also sounds the burial note for the Osiris-like corpse that Stetson "planted last year"(I.71).

In the same section of the poem the protagonist meets the "hyacinth girl"(I.35-41). John B. Vickery, in The Literary Impact of The Golden Bough (Princeton, U.P., 1973), p.250, explains that the girl is a representative of the aboriginal vegetative deity who was loved by Apollo:

> The hyacinths in the girl's arms represent the love of a god for man and the return of the god to the world of mankind. In ritual terms, this is represented by the sacred marriage. But the protagonist does not see this. . . . He cannot even detect the sacred marriage which the girl, who is a priestess of the god, is offering him. Her offer is one of knowledge and initiation on the lowest level of the quest; the mystery of human and vegetative fertility as symbolized by the sacred marriage is within the protagonist's grasp. But lacking the higher love, he sees in the sacred marriage "simply the coupling of animals" [the last insight is taken from Eliot, Selected Essays, 1917-1932 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), pp.234-35].

Mrs. Dalloway's "hyacinth girl" offers the promise of fertility as well. But Carrie Dempster "could not help wishing to whisper a word" to her about what really happens in a 'sacred marriage':

> Get married, she thought, and then you'll know . . . . For it's been a hard life, thought Mrs. Dempster. What hadn't she given to it? Roses; figure; her feet too. (She drew the knobbed lumps beneath her skirt.)
>
> Roses, she thought sardonically. All trash, m'dear. For really, what with eating, drinking, and mating, the bad days and good, life had been no mere matter of roses, and what was more, let me tell you, Carrie Dempster had no wish to change her lot with any woman's in Kentish Town! But, she implored, pity. Pity, for the loss of roses. Pity she asked of Maisie Johnson, standing by the hyacinth beds.(p.31)

Other possible Waste Land echoes will be included in the body of my essay; however one additional similarity is worth mentioning here. In The Waste Land moral and cultural sterility eventually alienate each member of society from all the others. Every man becomes like an individual atom because he no longer knows the meaning of the word "sympathize":

> Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
> Turn in the door once and turn once only
> We think of the key, each in his prison
> Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
> (V.411-14)

At the end of Mrs. Dalloway, Sally is bothered by their same inability to communicate with one another. She asks Peter:

> . . . what can one know even of the people one lives with every day? She asked. Are we not all prisoners? She had read a wonderful play about a man who scratched on the wall of his cell, and she had felt that was true of life--one scratched on the wall. . . .(p.213)

32 Daniel H. Woodward, in "Notes on the Publishing History and Text of The Waste Land," T.S. Eliot, The Waste Land: A Casebook, ed. C.B. Cox (London: Macmillan, 1968), p.79, gives the date of publication as 12 September 1922, the same month Bell, vol.2, pp.100-101, says that Mrs. Woolf was trying to describe Septimus' madness.

33 Bell, vol.2, p.86.

34 Golden Bough, IV, 21, 27.

35 Wyatt, p.451. These lines which appear on pp.283-84 of the Harcourt edition were deleted from the Penguin.

36 Ibid., p.451.

37 Ibid., p.450.

38 A similar point is made by Shields, p.82.

39 Wyatt, p.444.

40 Frazer, The Golden Bough, one volume abridged edition (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p.393. Frazer uses the Greek names of Demeter and Persephone. In Latin the same deities are called Ceres and Proserpine (see Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: Mentor, 1969), p.49.

41 Cited by L.T. Fitz, "Egyptian Queens and Male Reviewers: Sexist Attitudes in Antony and Cleopatra," Shakespeare Quarterly, 28, No.3 (Summer 1977), p.297. Hereafter cited as Fitz.

42 Hardin Craig, An Interpretation of Shakespeare (New York: Dryden, 1948), p.268. Hereafter cited as Craig.

43 Lytton Strachey, Literary Essays (New York: Harcourt,

Brace, ?), p.20. Schaeffer cites it on pp.193-94.

44 Schaeffer, p.194.

45 Essays, vol.IV, p.176. The entire essay deals with the way to revitalize the young English soldiers after the war.

46 Hugh Kenner, The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959), p.145. Hereafter cited as Kenner.

47 Wyatt, pp.442-43.

48 Wyatt, p.443, argues as follows: "So the earth-mother mourns her dead lover in the Adonis lament. The images identify woman and earth: her mouth is a hole in the ground, her song the life-giving stream which springs from the earth. Ageless and sexless, fertility itself, she rises above personal identity to embody the earth-mother whose archetype underlies the myths of Ishtar and Aphrodite. The song is dominated by imagery of the seasons, whose cycle corresponds to the presence and absence of the lover. She and her lover were together in spring, but he disappeared in summer (ages long as summer days), and with him disappeared the life of nature: death's enormous sickle had swept those tremendous hills. The cycle appears to end in winter and death, but spring imagery surges up in the following paragraph, the repetition of still emphasizing the perpetuity of spring's victory over winter: still the earth seemed green and flowery. The human cycle repeats the seasonal pattern: the passing generations. . . vanished, like leaves, to be trodden under, to be soaked and steeped and made mould of by that eternal spring (p.134). Although the interlude seems to end with the dying generations, the last word promises renewal. It fuses all the meanings attached to spring throughout the passage: the beggar-woman's song, the water that quickens the earth, and the season of new life. All three are "eternal" manifestations of nature's regenerative power."

Accompanying Wyatt's interpretation is what I consider to be an innacurately edited version of the beggar-woman passage. There is no mention of the ironic allusion to Clarissa's frigidness which precedes the description of the "earth-mother", nor of Rezia's equally ironic misinterpretation of her song which follows it. In the passage itself all the sterility imagery has been deleted with ellipses. Gone is the description of the woman being likened to "a wind-beaten tree for ever barren of leaves," the "hoar" and "silver frosted" flowers, the "blurred" visions of the " ancient May day" and of the lover himself. Gone too is the fact that the song is "absent of all human meaning," and that the woman now holds out a hand for coppers when she used to extend it for love. These are all satirical notes which must be considered along with all the fertility imagery in order to achieve a balanced reading of the passage. I suspect that even the adjective "sexless" may cast aspersions on this earth-mother's powers. While it is true that certain fertility gods were "sexless", the description here is not entirely without irony. The narrator recognizes that she is a woman only because "she wore a skirt"; and the woman herself just barely remembers that it "was a man, oh yes, a man who had loved her."

49 Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York: Mentor, 1969), p.179.

Chapter III

1 Moments, p.119.

2 Night & Day, p.33.

3 The Waves, p.214.

4 Aristotle, The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp.1466-67. Hereafter cited as Aristotle.

5 Cited by Robert O'Brien, Tragedy: Ten Major Plays (New York: Bantam, 1969), p.2.

6 Northrop Frye, Fools of Time: Studies in Shakespearean Tragedy (Toronto: U.P., 1967), p.14. Hereafter cited as Fools of Time.

7 The Waves, p.214.

8 Moments, p.119.

9 Wyatt, p.440, refers to him as "a compilation of literary fragments culled from his voracious reading."

10 Alex Page, "A Dangerous Day: Mrs. Dalloway Discovers Her Double," Modern Fiction Studies, 7, No.2 (summer 1961), p.120. Septimus cries: "but he would not go mad"(p.26); "and would he go mad"(p.100); "he would not go mad"(p.157). Lear tries to obviate madness by crying out: "O, let me not be mad, not mad. . . . I would not be mad"(I.v.50-51); "O, that way madness lies; let me shun that"(III.iv.21); "O, fool! I shall go mad"(II.iv.289).

11 A.C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (London: McMillan, 1964), p.20. Hereafter cited as Bradley.

12 Bradley, pp.13-14.

13 Frye, in Fools of Time, p.24, says: "The authority of the order-figure is attached to a mysterious and invisible nature of which we know little except that it has authority, and, in Shakespearean tragedy, it is usually only the ruler's ghost that walks. Except for the episode of Hercules leaving Antony. . . there is nothing really supernatural in Shakespeare's tragedies that is not connected with the murder of order-figures."

14 Ibid., pp.34-5.

15 Craig, p.195.

16 Fools of Time, p.3.

17 Those who would question her qualifications as a "tragic-hero" should see Fitz, which starts by pointing out that Shakespeare gave the entire fifth act to the Egyptian Queen.

18 Jan Kott, Shakespeare Our Contemporary, Tr. Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1967), p.139.

19 In the Penguin edition, the five sections are found on pp.17-19, 25-30, 73-78, 92-113, and 154-67.

20 In Bradley, pp.40-63, the author equates the reversal of the hero's fortunes, which always comes in the third act, with the climax. After the climax, Bradley finds "a constant alternation of hope and fear leading up to the catastrophe."
Ruth Nevo, in Tragic Form in Shakespeare (Princeton: U.P., 1972), pp.20-21, explains why she thinks that Bradley was wrong to look for the climax in the third

act instead of the fifth.

21 Harvena Richter, Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage (New Haven: Princeton U.P., 1970), p.139. In the Bibliography, Richter refers to the source as "Maroon Leather Notebook (small). November 9, 1922, to August 2, 1923.

22 Anatomy, p.175.

23 Ibid., p.218.

24 Woolf, "On Not Knowing Greek," Collected Essays, vol.I, pp.5-6. Hereafter cited as "On Not Knowing Greek."

25 Aristotle, p.1474.

26 See footnote 29, ch. II.

27 Aeschylus, The Oresteia, tr. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1975), p.3. Hereafter cited as The Oresteia.

28 In Diary, pp.57-9, 63 and 68, it is quite clear that she was working on Mrs. Dalloway and the first series of The Common Reader simultaneously. Bell, vol. II, confirms this on p.98: ". . . In 1922 Virginia hit upon the plan of writing two books simultaneously: her novel [Mrs. Dalloway] and a work of criticism which she had at first called Reading and now The Common Reader. The one, she calculated, would provide relief from the other. The Common Reader was based, largely, upon articles which she had already published, but to this she added some new material and, notably, the long essay entitled On Not Knowing Greek. It was with this theme in mind that she planned . . . to read Sophocles, Euripides and the first five books of the Odyssey. . . . A little later she decided that she must also read Zimmern and Aeschylus."

In "On Not Knowing Greek," Woolf refers to Agamemnon throughout the essay. And, thanks to Harvena Richter (see footnote 21), we know that Woolf was also reading The Choephori (The Libation Bearers), the second play in the trilogy.

29 "On Not Knowing Greek," pp.11-12.

30 The Oresteia, p.6.

31 Ibid., p.164.

32 Ibid., p.271.

33 Ibid., p.86.

34 In Anatomy, p.162, Frye makes the point about the upward movement of Dante.

35 Cited by Fagles in The Oresteia, p.94.

36 Dante, The Divine Comedy, tr. H.F. Cary, ed. G. Gardner (London: J.M. Dent, 1908), p.xii, Hereafter cited as Dante.

37 Dante, p.xiii. Gardner makes the point.

38 See note 21, ch. II.

39 Anatomy, p.210.

40 Bradley, p.9.

41 In Bradley, p.37, the author makes the same point.

42 In A Natural Perspective, p.98, Frye remarks: "In tragedy, of course, the hero is always something of an idiotes, isolated from the society in which he has his being."

43 Fools of Time, p.5.

44 William Morris, News From Nowhere, ed. James Raymond (London: Rutledge, 1970), p.xxv.

45 Dr. R.D. McMaster, Professor of English at the University of Alberta, stresses the fact that this is one of the central ideas behind Morris' utopia. I am indebted to Dr. McMaster for many of my ideas on Morris, Huxley, Darwin, and Victorian thought in general.

46 Philip Appleman, ed., Darwin (New York: Norton, 1970), pp.40, 312. Hereafter cited as Appleman.

47 T.H. Huxley, Collected Essays (London: Macmillan, 1894), p.27.

48 Diary, p.54.

49 Appleman, p.164.

50 Marbot, Mémoires, p.393. In the text I have given the following passage:

> En entendant invoquer un nom vénéré, mon esprit, exalté par tout ce qui m'entourait, fut frappé d'hallucination, au point que je crus voir une main blanche, si connue de moi, se poser sur la poitrine du jeune homme que j'allais percer, et il me sembla entendre la voix de ma mère prononcer les mots: "Grâce! grâce!" Mon sabre s'abaissa!

Clarissa, of course, is reading the English version, Memoirs.

51 Woolf, Collected Essays, vol. IV, (London: Hogarth, 1967), p.216.

52 John Stuart Mill, Dissertations and Discussions, vol. I (London: Parker, 1859), p.186.

53 Bell, vol. I, p.104.

54 Jacob, p.160.

55 Ibid., p.139.

56 The Voyage, p.52.

57 Ibid., p.39.

58 Acts, pp. 22 & 26. This is how Isa's father-in-law refers to books.

59 Acts, pp. 26 & 27, N.C. Thakur, in The Symbolism of Virginia Woolf (London: Oxford, 1965), p.151, makes the following comment on the same passage: "the picking up of The Times in preference to books--'the mirror of the soul,' therefore, becomes symbolic, as in Jacob's Room, of the shallowness of mind which craves only for something exciting and stirring."

60 Joseph Conrad, Three Great Tales (New York: Random House, no date given), p.viii. Hereafter cited as Conrad. I could not help but wonder if Maisie Johnson's outburst, "Horror! Horror!"(p.31), was not influenced by Kurtz's horrible "summing-up" in Heart of Darkness.

61 Conrad, pp.ix-x.

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